

Ancient Wars

Dennis Showalter

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THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
WARFARE

ANCIENT WARS

c.2500BCE—500CE



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FOREWORD TO THE SERIES

by Dennis Showalter

The Encyclopedia of Warfare offers five characteristics justifying its possession. First, it is chronological. Its entries reflect a fundamental characteristic of history. History is linear. It starts somewhere in time. It goes somewhere in time. Its events interact in a temporal context. And the encyclopedia's chronological perspective enables making connections that otherwise might remain obscure. It contextualizes, for example, the 1147 siege of Lisbon with the Crusader-Turkish wars of the same period – and in the process demonstrating the comprehensive aspect of Christian–Muslim rivalry. Lisbon was far from Jerusalem only in terms of miles.

The encyclopedia is also comprehensive. It eschews a Western-centric perspective that too often sacrifices understanding for familiarity. The chronological chapters are subdivided by time and place. Thus they integrate the ancient wars of China and of South and South-East Asia, the battles of early Rome and those of Ireland in the twenty-fifth century BCE (a single entry, to be sure, but meriting consideration!) Cross-referencing cannot be easier. And that cross referencing enables not merely juxtaposition, but comparison on a global scale of war's methods and war's consequences.

The encyclopedia is concise. Its entries honour a time-tested formula. They address 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where', 'why', and thereby offer frameworks for further investigation of taproots and ramifications. But that does not mean a 'one size fits all' template. Events recognized as important – Hattin, Gettysburg, the Somme – are more fully developed without distorting the essentially economical format. Nor are the entries mere narratives. They incorporate analytical dimensions relative to their length and insightful whether phrases, sentences or paragraphs – like the comment that Crusader Jerusalem's 1187 surrender to Saladin involved ransoming most of the population 'at reasonable rates'!

The encyclopedia is user-friendly and clearly written. Not only are its more than five thousand entries individually intelligible. The graphics synergise with the text, enhancing rather than challenging or submerging it. The maps in particular are models of their kind, both accurate and informative.

Finally the encyclopedia is concentrated on warmaking. It eschews military history's framing concepts, whether economic, cultural or gender, in favour of presenting war at its sharp end. That enables covering the full spectrum: wars and revolutions, campaigns and counter-insurgencies, battle and sieges. And in turn the encyclopedia's format facilitates integrating, rather than compartmentalising, war's levels and war's aspects. In these pages Marathon and Hastings, the rise of the Roman Empire and the British Empire, become subjects for comparison and contrast.

The Encyclopedia of Warfare, in short, admirably fulfills the definition of a work that provides information on many elements of one subject. Its value, however, is also in context. This work makes broader contributions to military history's reference apparatus, and to its reference mentality, on two levels. The encyclopedia complements the electronic era's meme of 'six degrees of separation'. The idea that everything is no more than six steps away from everything else is a natural byproduct of websurfing, where a half-dozen mouse clicks can lead far away indeed from the original reference point. It also encourages diffusion: engagement on peripheries at the expense of the centre.

The Encyclopedia of Warfare encourages and facilitates refocusing on war's essential elements: the planning, conduct and result of using armed force. Diffusion is a natural aspect of the currently dominant approach to military history as an academic discipline. The concept of pivotal events has been overshadowed by an emphasis on underlying structures: reaching out from the operational towards the institutional, the political and the social dimensions. War's sharp end at best jostles for place. It can lose out to an intellectual disdain that is also aesthetic and moral. Warfare, in the sense of making war, is arguably to the twenty-first century what sex allegedly was to the Victorians. It involves emotions nice people do not feel and actions nice people do not perform. Writing about it becomes the new pornography, pandering to appetites best left neither nurtured nor acknowledged.

The encyclopedia contributes balance and perspective to this discourse. Its contents reinforce the specific, unique nature and function of armed forces compared to any other institutions. Its entries demonstrate that warmaking has had a direct, significant impact on human affairs; that combat has fundamentally altered history's course in both short and long terms. To understand this is to understand the world in which we live. And *The Encyclopedia of Warfare* enables that understanding in an impressive fashion.

DENNIS SHOWALTER
June 2013

Ancient Wars

c.2500 BCE–500 CE

It is a reasonable assumption to make that hundreds – if not thousands – of ancient battles took place for which no record survives today. Yet even those that history has chosen to preserve come to us with the scantest detail, frustrating students from a later era.

Mediterranean & Middle Eastern Wars c.2500–500 BCE

■ HAİK VS NIMROD, C.2492 BCE

Nimrod came to rule Mesopotamia through military conquest, and founded several cities. According to Armenian legends, he was defeated near Lake Van by the Armenian patriarch Haik, who killed him with a bow shot from a great distance.

■ LAGASH VS UMMU, C.2450 BCE

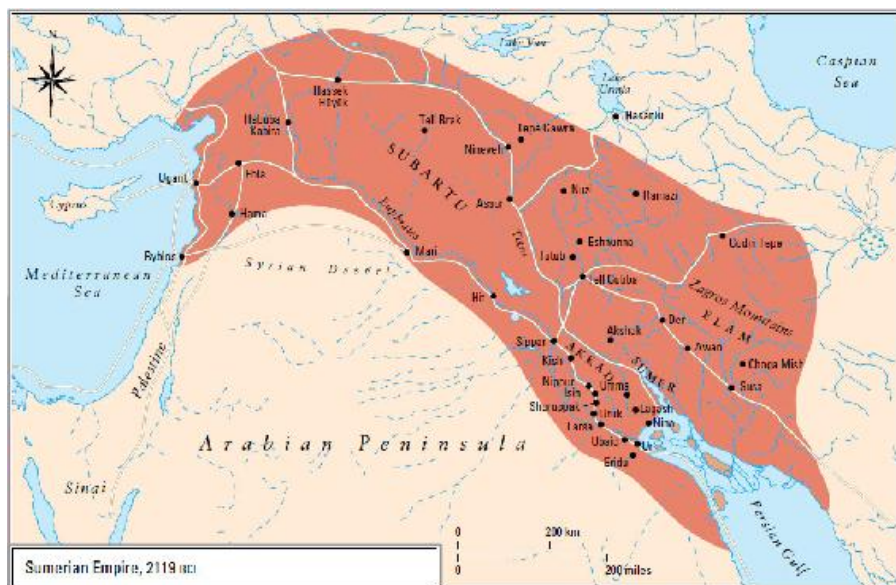
The earliest battle currently known to history arose from a border dispute between the city-states of Lagash and Umma. Carvings of the battle suggest that the main fighting force involved was a dense phalanx of spearmen.

■ CONQUESTS OF SARGON, C.2234–2284 BCE

King Sargon of Akkad is credited with forming the world's first true army. Leading a force of 5000 professional soldiers armed with bows and bronze hand weapons, he subdued and conquered Mesopotamia.

■ URUK, C.2340 BCE

During the conquest of Sumer, Sargon the Great's army attacked and destroyed the city of Uruk. Surviving forces from the city formed part of a great Sumerian alliance, which was in turn defeated.



■ VICTORY OVER KASHTUBILA, C.2300 BCE

Among the foes faced by Sargon the Great was Kashtubila, king of Kazalla, a city to the west of Mesopotamia. Kashtubila opposed Sargon but was comprehensively defeated. His city was razed to the ground, so thoroughly destroyed that it was said that birds could not find

anywhere to perch in the ruins.

■ MARI, C.2300 BCE

Sargon's early campaigns were directed against city-states in the fertile crescent, cementing his power over the whole region. The city of Mari on the Euphrates river was one of his targets. Once conquered, it became an Akkadian administrative centre.

■ YARMUTI (JARMUT), C.2300 BCE

The location of Yarmuti is unclear, but it may have been a trading port on the Phoenician coast. Many of Sargon's campaigns were directed at securing trade routes and valuable resources, which would make such a port a logical target.

■ EBLA, C.2250 BCE

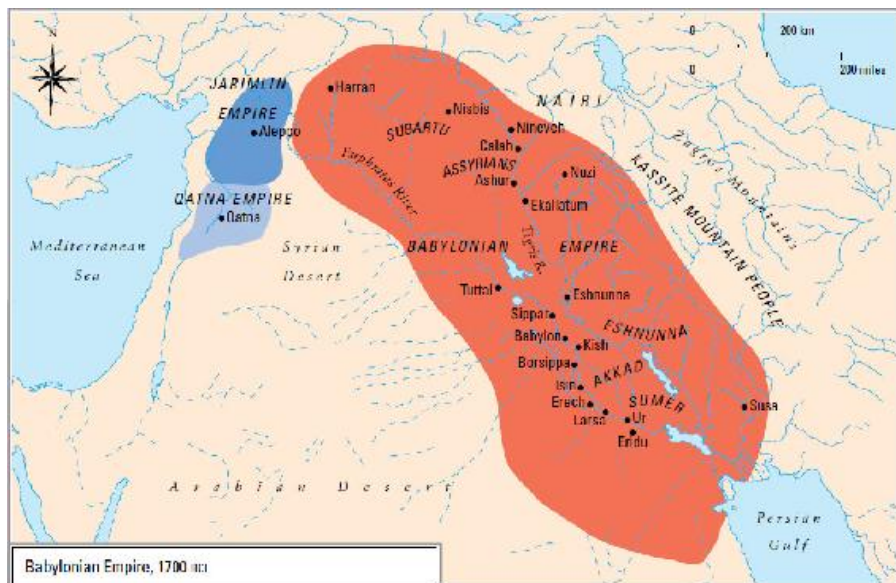
Ebla was an important trade centre in northern Syria. It is claimed that Sargon of Akkad captured and destroyed the city, though the date and circumstances remain unclear. Ebla eventually regained some of its power, but was attacked again by Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin.

■ CEDAR FOREST & TAURUS, C.2250 BCE

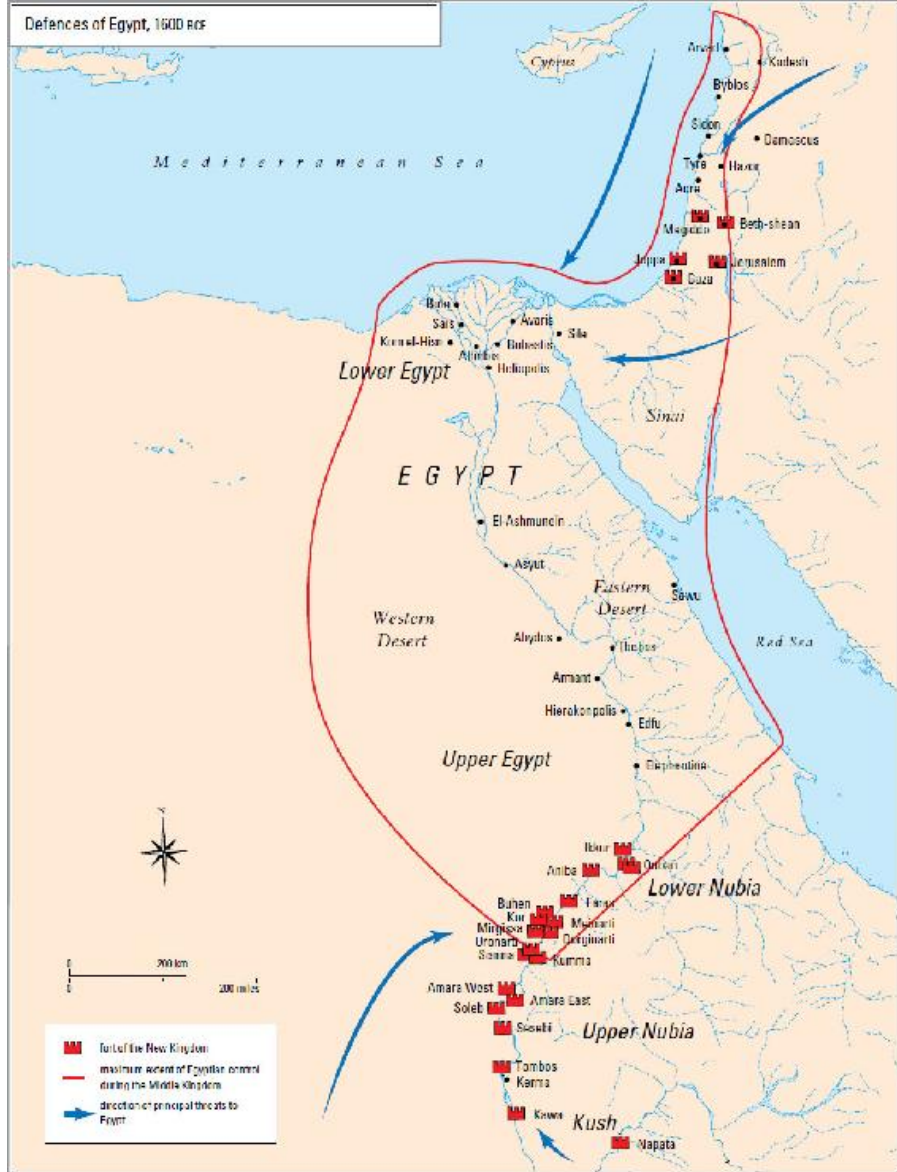
Sargon's campaigns took him northward into what is today known as Turkey, to the Amanus and Taurus mountains. It is unclear exactly what foes he faced here, possibly tribal peoples and small independent city-states.

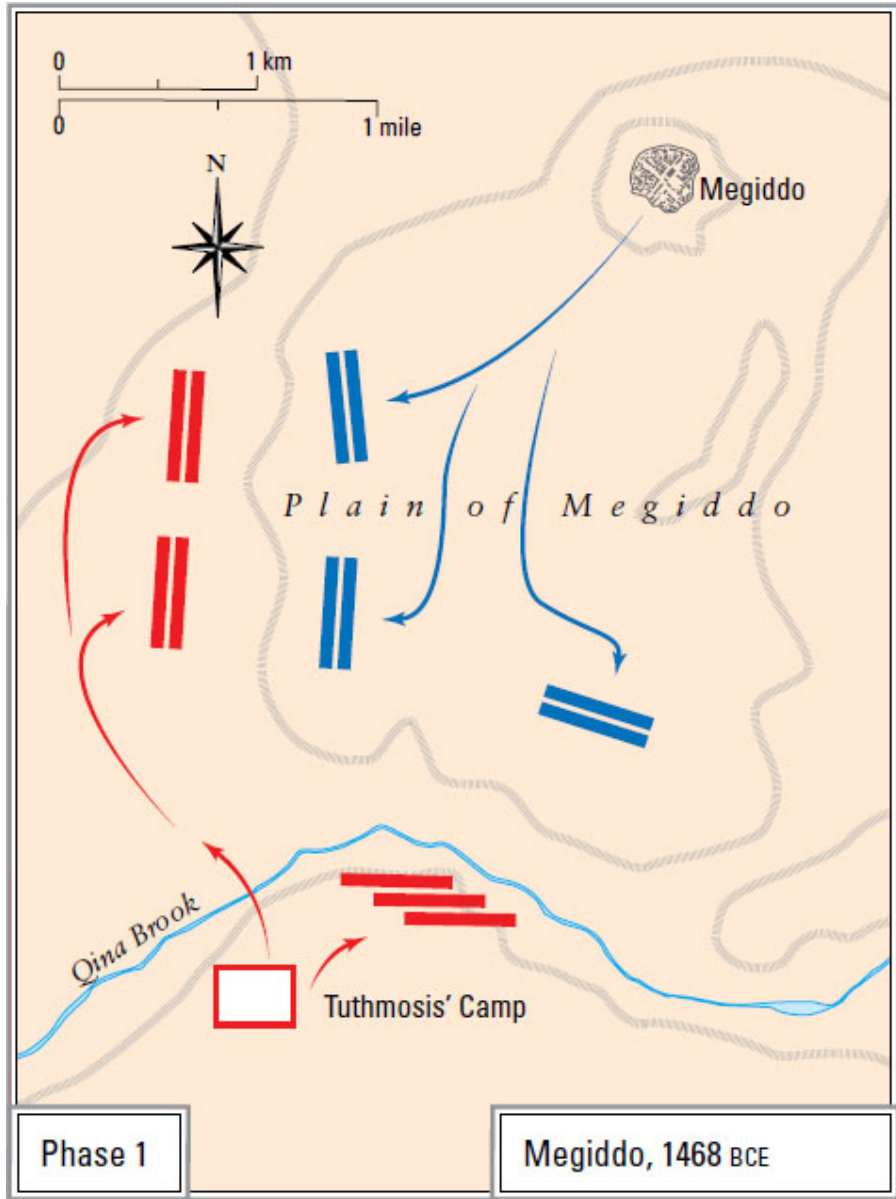
■ FALL OF SUMER, C.2006 BCE

Changing agricultural conditions weakened the Sumerian city-states as pressure from Amorite tribes increased. Unable to feed its population, Sumeria was incapable of resistance and was gradually overrun by the invaders.



Defences of Egypt, 1600 BC





■ FALL OF UR, c.1940 BCE

The city-state of Ur was sacked by invading Elamite tribes from the east, after which Sumeria came under Amorite rule. The Amorites gradually became absorbed into the culture of the region, forming the basis for the Babylonian Empire.

■ BATTLES OF HAMMURABI, c.1763–1758 BCE

Predecessors of Hammurabi, the Amorite king of Babylon, had conquered some of the surrounding city-states. Hammurabi built on their success by making alliances then turning on his former allies, establishing Babylon as the dominant power in southern

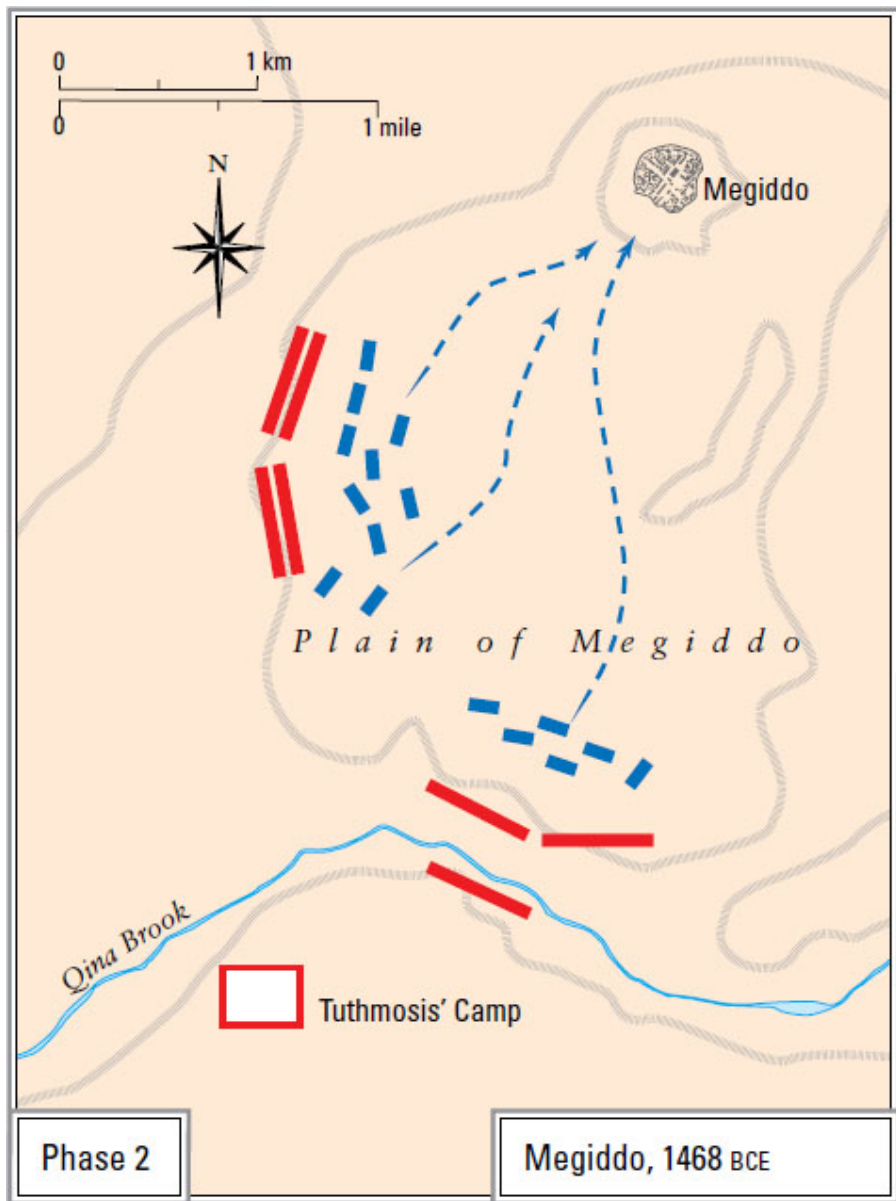
Mesopotamia.

■ **ALEPPO, 1590 BCE**

As Babylon declined in power, the Hittites were able to advance down the Euphrates river, sacking Aleppo. Internal troubles prevented the Hittites from consolidating their gains, and they ceased to be a major power for several decades.

■ **MEGIDDO, c.1468 BCE**

Pharaoh Tuthmosis III was co-regent with his aunt, Hapshepsut, for the first 22 years of his reign. During this time he served as head of the army, gaining a reputation as an excellent commander. An alliance of Canaanite princes attempted to take advantage of the inevitable disruption caused by Hapshepsut's death in order to secede from Egyptian rule. However, they had miscalculated; Tuthmosis moved rapidly against them at the head of a well-organized army. The subsequent battle at Megiddo was extensively recorded at the behest of the victorious Tuthmosis, becoming the first fully documented battle in history.



The Egyptian army benefited from unified and cohesive command, while the opposing forces were led by allied princes who argued among themselves over matters of strategy and precedence. Their army was deployed near Megiddo, with a formidable ridge blocking the Egyptian approach. Had Tuthmosis taken either of the conventional routes, north or south around the ridge, the Canaanites would have been able to deploy against him in good time. Instead, he attempted a risky march through a narrow pass. Even a small blocking force could have successfully held the pass, but it had been left unguarded, perhaps due to problems within the Canaanite command

structure. It was to be a fatal mistake on the part of the Canaanites

The Canaanite forces became disorganized as they redeployed, while the Egyptians formed up in a far more disciplined manner. The initial Egyptian attack took the form of a mass chariot charge that threw back the disordered Canaanites. Organized resistance was impossible and the Canaanite army rapidly collapsed. Many of the survivors took refuge in Megiddo itself, where they were besieged until the city fell several months later.

■ TUTHMOSIS' SYRIAN CAMPAIGNS, c.1460 BCE

Tuthmosis III of Egypt undertook several campaigns into Syria, conquering numerous towns. These campaigns may have been supported by naval transport for supplies or even troops. The economies of Syria were left in ruins as a result, reducing the chances of a successful rebellion.

■ TUTHMOSIS' CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE MITANNI, c.1458 BCE

The Egyptian army gained the advantage of surprise by carrying out what appeared to be merely another campaign in Syria, then suddenly marching to the Euphrates and crossing in boats they had carried with them. The Mitanni were totally unprepared and easily defeated.

■ FALL OF CRETE, c.1400 BCE

The Minoan civilization arose on the island of Crete around 2700 BCE. Around 1400 BCE, a series of natural disasters weakened the Minoans, whose culture was displaced by the more warlike Mycenaean Greek civilization.

■ SUGAGI, c.1308 BCE

In the late Bronze Age, Babylonia was ruled by the Kassites, who conquered Assyria. Assyria rebelled and began to rebuild its power, leading to the battle of Sugagi, which established the border between the two states.

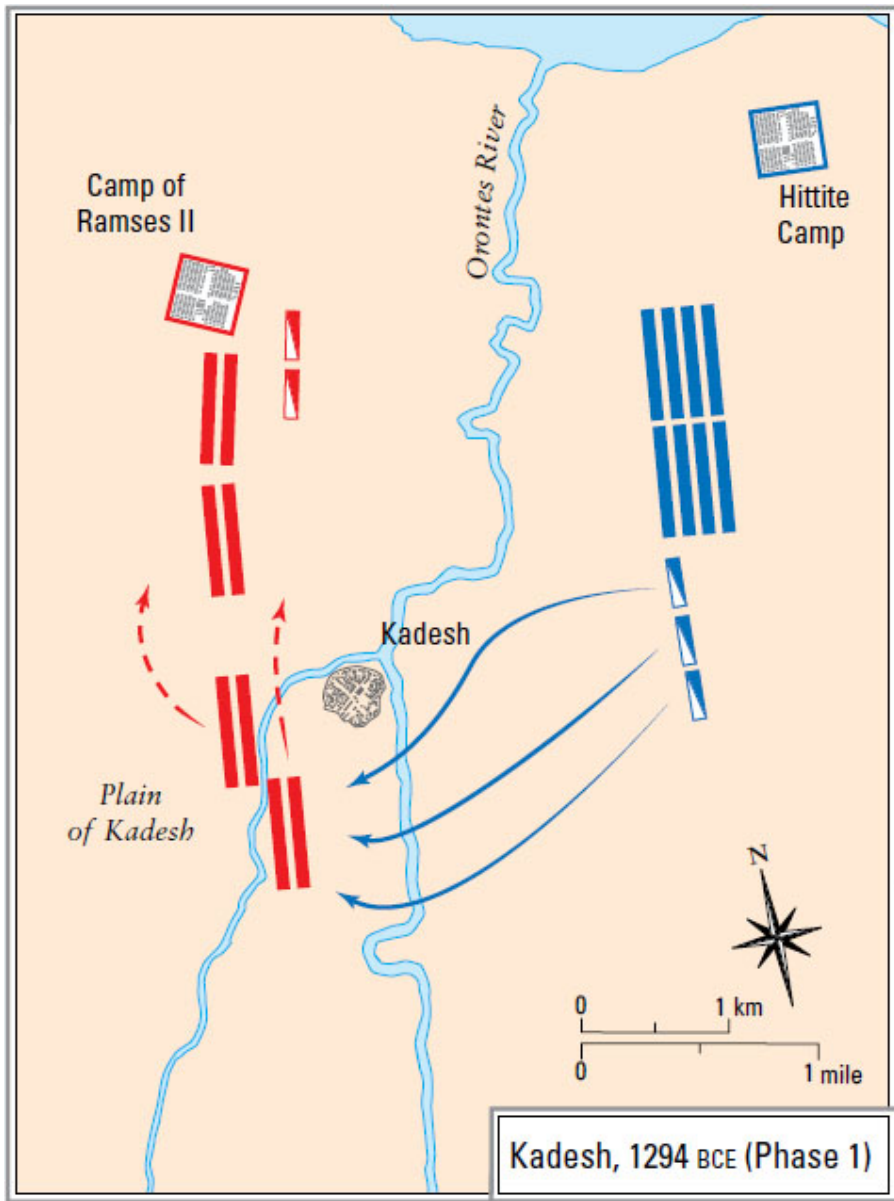
■ KADESH, 1294 BCE

Egyptian dominance over Canaan waxed and waned several times as Egypt both lost territory to rebellions and invasions, then retook it. The region was somewhat too remote to maintain permanent strong control, but too close to permit a foreign power to dominate. The increasing power of the Hittites, who originated north of Canaan, resulted in several clashes and, consequently, improvements in military technology. Among these developments was an improved axe with better performance against armour. Egyptian chariots were also made lighter and faster, permitting the chariot force to become an elite striking arm.

There was nothing new about conflict between the Egyptians and the Hittites. Indeed, among the opponents of Tuthmosis III at Megiddo were the Mitanni people, forerunners of the Hittites. Like the

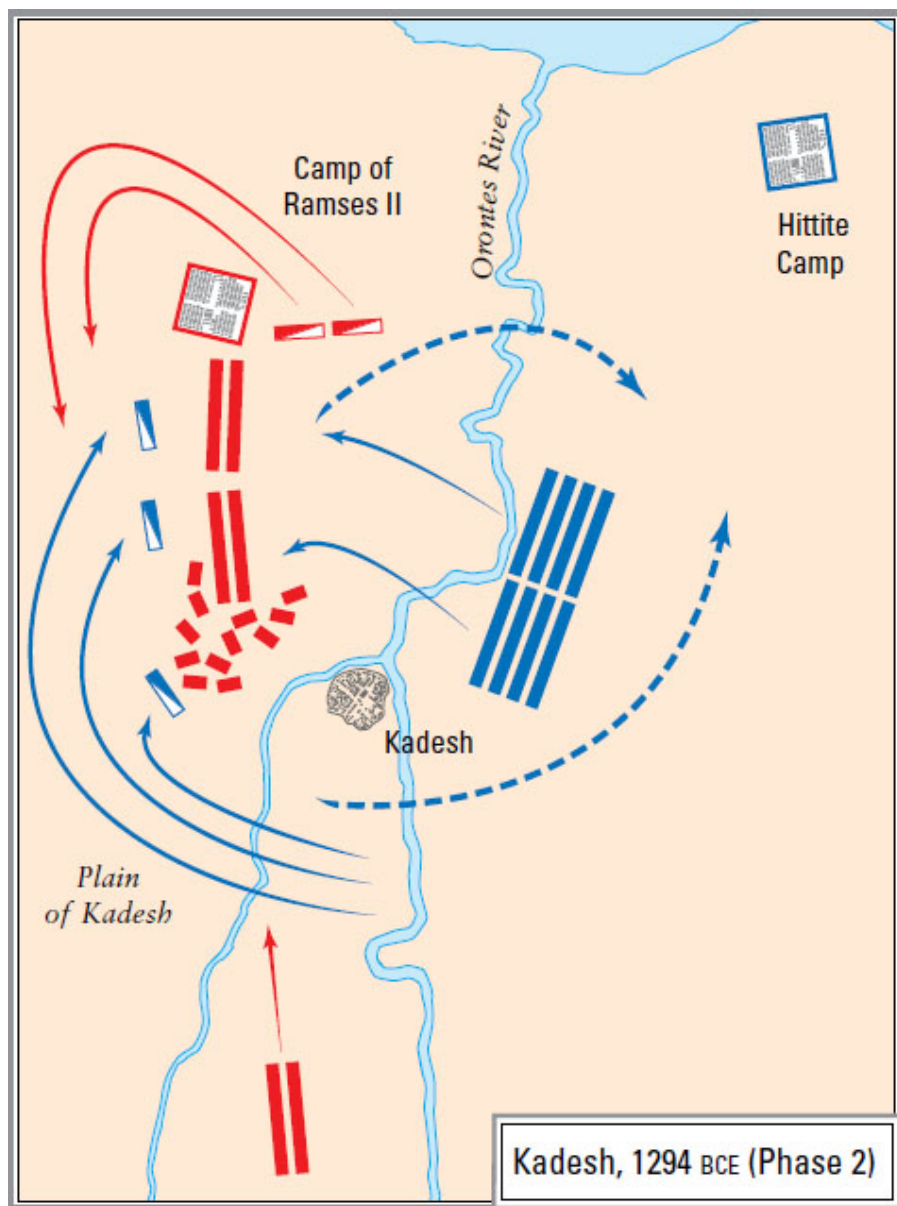
Egyptians, the Hittites had a centralized empire and a well-organized military. They also wanted dominance over Canaan and were willing to fight for it. Pharaoh Ramses II marched through Sinai into Canaan with an army of some 20,000 men. This army was divided into four divisions, each with its own identity and command structure. The Pharaoh's bodyguard formed a separate body from the four main divisions and was held under his close command. The force also included significant numbers of mercenaries who were recruited partly to add fighting power and partly to deprive the enemy of using them.

The Egyptians at the time had a sophisticated system of intelligence gathering, using spies and agents who reported to officers trained to handle them. Information was obtained as the army advanced, though in this case it turned out to be faulty. Mutwallis, the Hittite king, had taken up position near Kadesh but sent men posing as deserters towards the advancing Egyptians. These men told Ramses that the main Hittite force was still distant. Seeing an opportunity for decisive victory, Ramses dispensed with reconnaissance and instead rushed forward to meet the enemy before they could be reinforced. He took with him only his bodyguard force and one 5000-man division, which reached Kadesh unopposed. The Hittites had concealed their force using the city as cover and launched a chariot strike against a second Egyptian division, which was moving up in support. This was routed, the survivors seeking safety with the Pharaoh's force. The Egyptian army came under severe pressure, with the Hittites blocking their line of retreat, but gained some respite when the Hittites paused to plunder their camp.



As the fighting became more confused, the Hittites failed to notice the approach of the other two 5000-strong Egyptian divisions and a force of mercenaries marching up from the coast. These divisions hit the Hittite flank and rear, taking the pressure off the Pharaoh. Ramses took advantage of this opportunity to launch a disorganized counter-attack with his personal bodyguard in the lead. This decisive action rallied the wavering Egyptians, and it was the Hittite army that broke under the pressure. They fell back into Kadesh and took up defensive positions that Ramses judged his army was too weak to take by force. A peace treaty – the earliest known to history – was negotiated and

both kings returned home to claim victory. The Egyptians could perhaps claim a narrow victory, but they had not achieved enough to change the strategic situation. The treaty did, however, secure the northern frontier against greater Hittite incursions and it prevented further conflict for a time.



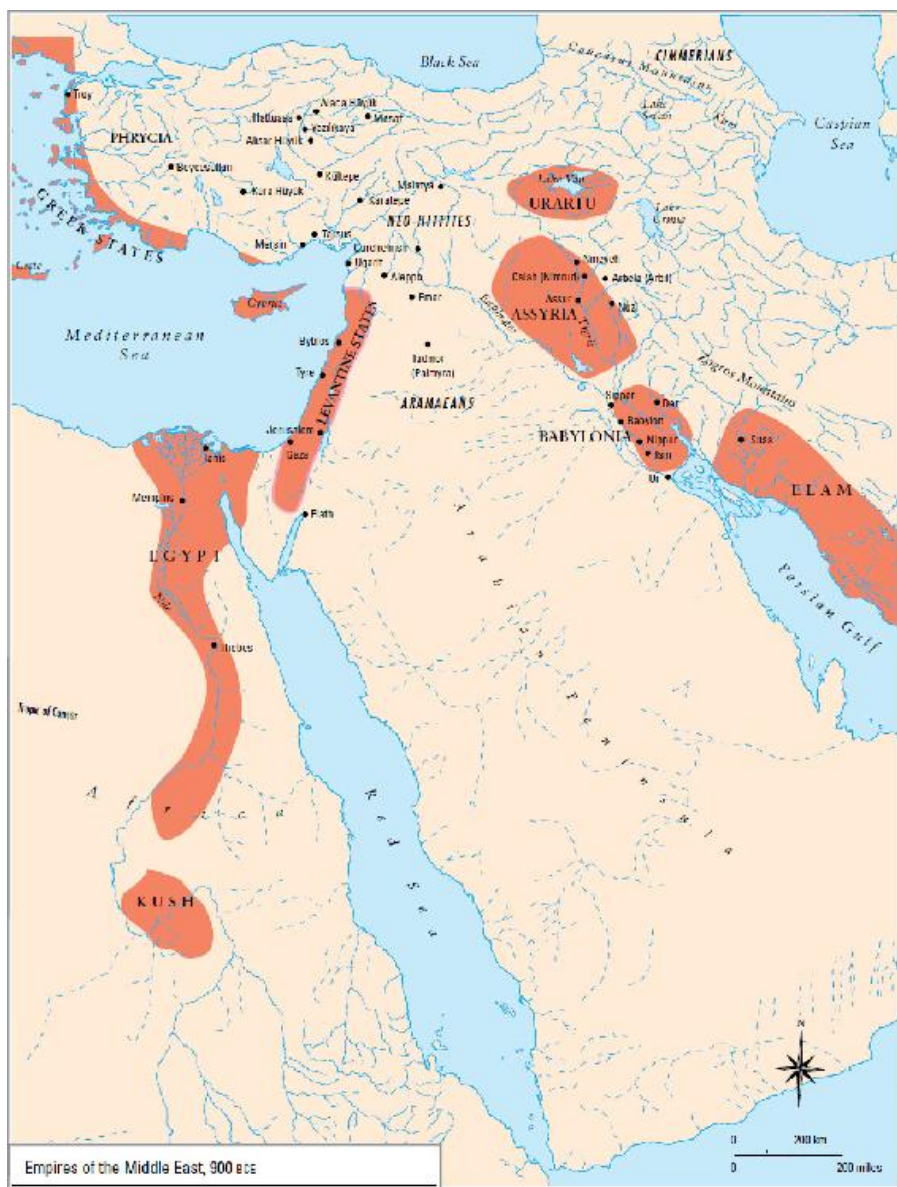
■ DAPUR, 1269 BCE

Dapur was one of several rebel Canaanite cities recaptured by Pharaoh Ramses II. He chose to use assault rather than siege tactics. Ladders were used to scale the walls while axe-armed troops broke through the

gates.

■ SIEGE OF TROY, c.1184 BCE

It is thought that legends of the 10-year siege of Troy are based on historical events, though proof is sketchy. Traditionally, Troy was besieged by an alliance of Achaean Greeks who finally destroyed the city.



■ INVASION OF THE SEA PEOPLES, 1179 BCE

After sacking many cities around the eastern end of the Mediterranean, the Sea Peoples advanced on Egypt by sea and overland. The Pharaoh constructed the world's first purpose-built war

■ MOUNT GILBOA, c. 1000 BCE

Although traditionally oppo

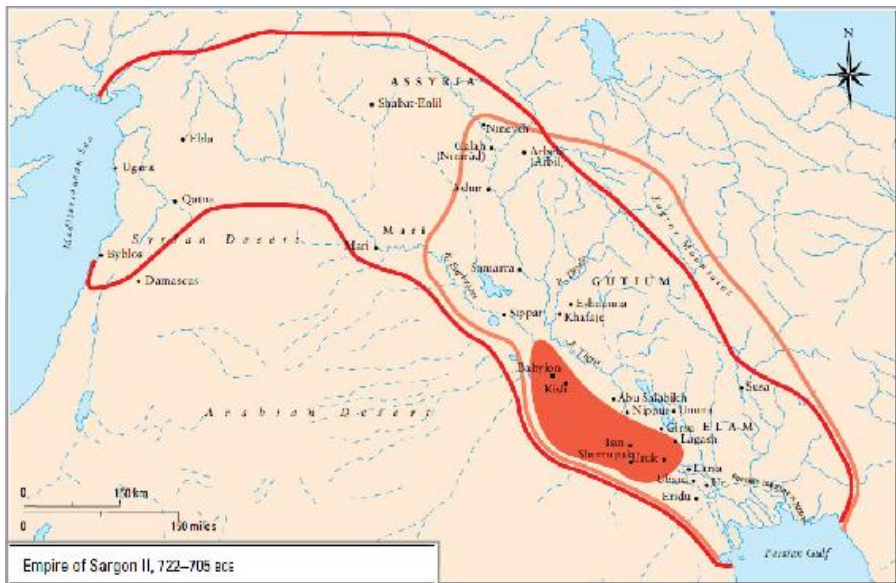
■ **QARQAR, 853 BCE**
The Assyrian King Salmaneser III led his army against a hostile alliance in what was at the time the largest battle ever fought. The battle was inconclusive, and it was not for several years that Assyrian dominance was established.

The Assyrian King

■ **GEZER, 733 BCE**
The city of Gezer occupied a strategic site above the coastal plain of what is today known as Israel. It was besieged and captured by the Assyrian Empire, which later used it as an administrative centre for the surrounding region.

The city of Gezer

Map of the Empire of Sargon II, 722-705 BCE. The map shows the empire's extent from the Mediterranean Sea in the west to the Persian Gulf in the east, and from Assyria in the north to the Arabian Desert in the south. Key regions include Assyria, Gutium, and Elam. Major cities like Nineveh, Ashur, Mari, and Susa are marked. The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are shown, along with the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Desert. A scale bar indicates 100 km and 100 miles. A compass rose is in the top right corner.



■ ETHIOPIAN CONQUEST OF EGYPT, 730 BCE

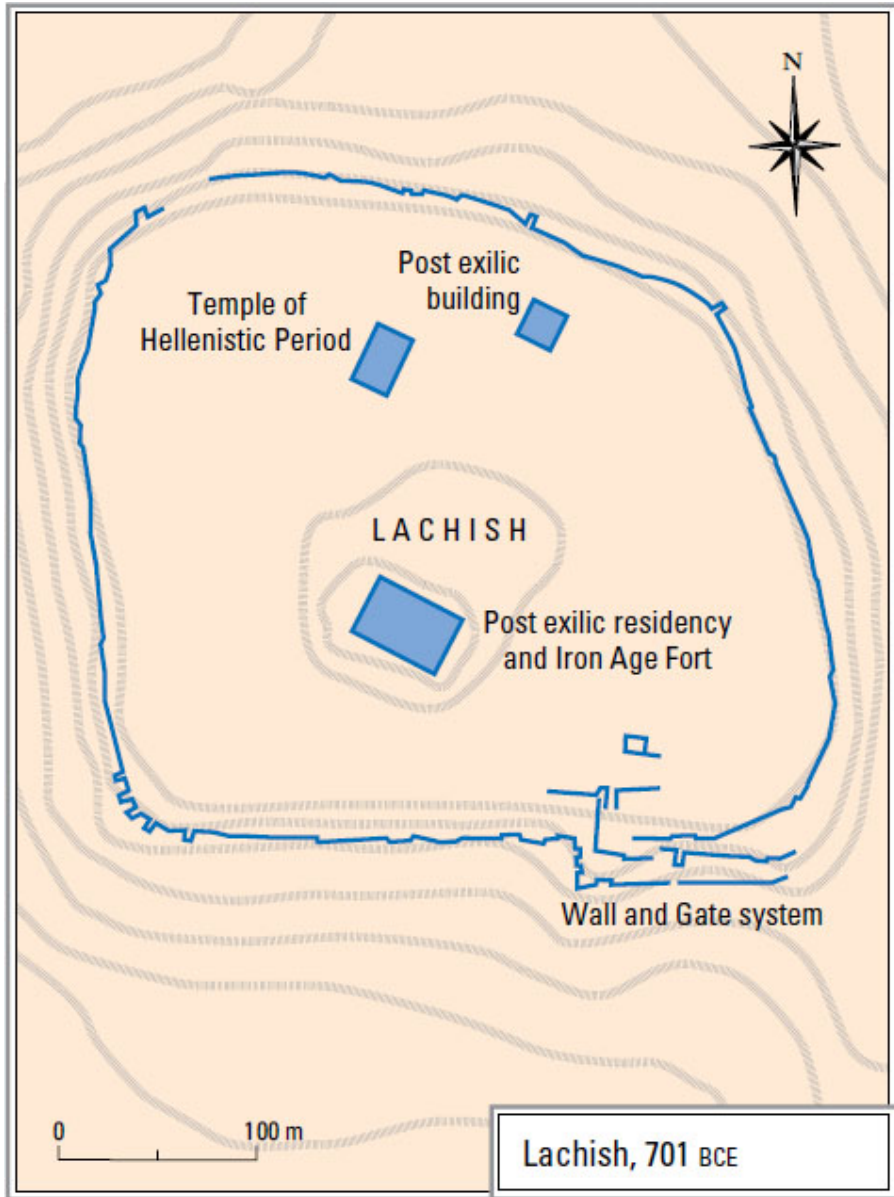
Responding to a request for assistance from the city of Thebes, the Ethiopian King Piye marched his army into Egypt and was able to reunify the fragmented country under his rule. Ethiopian (Nubian) kings ruled Egypt for the next several decades.

■ SIEGE OF SAMARIA, 724–722 BCE

The expanding Assyrian Empire advanced into Jewish lands, which were divided into the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Samaria, capital of Israel, was besieged for three years before finally falling. Its population was deported, a common Assyrian practice.

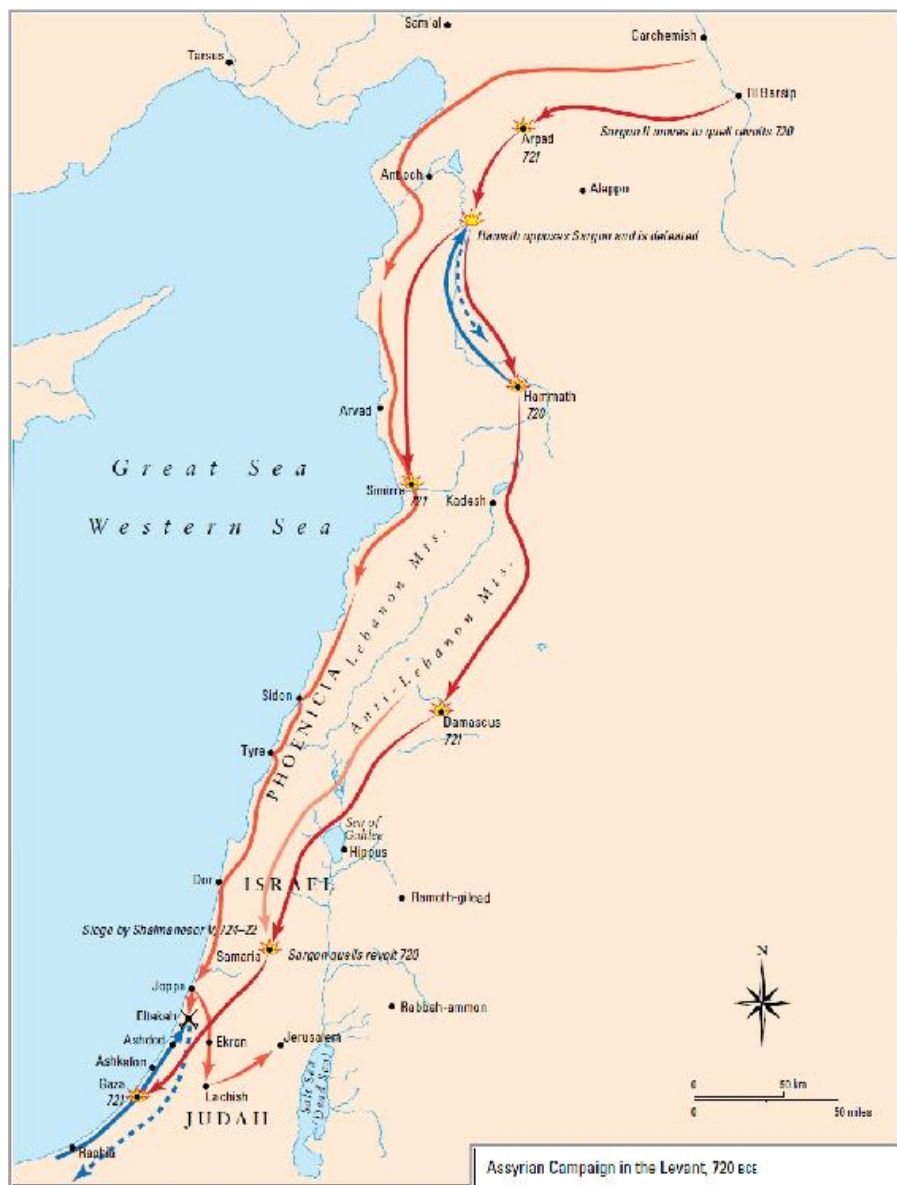
■ SIEGE OF LACHISH, 701 BCE

The Jewish kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians in 722–705 BCE. The capital was destroyed and its population deported, leaving only Judah as an independent Jewish state. Judah was small and insignificant, wholly unable to resist the powerful Assyrian army without outside help. Aware that an alliance of Egyptian, Phoenician and Philistine forces was forming against Assyria, King Hezekiah of Judah decided to stop paying his ruinous tribute to Assyria and rose in rebellion. The Egyptians were quickly defeated by Assyrian troops and the alliance fell apart. Judah escaped retribution on this occasion, despite the fact that the Assyrians normally followed a policy of harsh reprisals for rebellion. However, the tribute was reinstated and it seemed that it was only a matter of time before Judah was annexed. The death in 705 BCE of Assyrian King Sargon II at the hands of his own troops offered a second chance at independence. Judah sought allies and began a military campaign, but Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, broke Babylonian and Egyptian armies with ease. Judah surrendered and was again spared, until four years later when Sennacherib announced that he intended to settle the Judah problem by force. The Assyrian army was at that time virtually unbeatable in the field, and the greatly inferior forces of Judah did not even try. Instead they retreated to their fortresses, which were taken one by one. As the Assyrians advanced, the fortifications of Jerusalem, the capital, and other towns such as Lachish were strengthened against the inevitable siege.



When the Assyrian army reached Lachish, the town was offered a chance to surrender as per the usual Assyrian practice. This was accompanied by parades and a display of force by the Assyrians, underlining the threat to the town. The offer was refused, forcing Sennacherib to choose between a lengthy siege and a costly assault. He chose the latter. After first encircling the town to prevent aid and supplies from reaching it, the Assyrian army began preparations for the assault. A huge earthen ramp was constructed, giving access to the walls. This was built mainly by forced labour, using prisoners captured elsewhere. Assyrian archers, armed with powerful composite

bows and protected by armour, shot at anyone trying to interfere with the work. Once the ramp was completed, it was faced with stone slabs, allowing a siege tower to be pushed up to the top. Diversionary assaults were made elsewhere, using iron-tipped rams against the walls. A breach was made, though the defenders were able to reinforce the threatened section of wall with a ramp of their own.



The final assault was made at several points, using ladders to gain access to the wall while the siege tower was advanced into position. Covered by archery, the Assyrian infantry assaulted the walls and drove the defenders from them. They then entered the town and ran

riot. The Assyrians committed many atrocities in Lachish, impaling leaders and putting much of the population to the sword. These actions may have been deliberately encouraged as a means of spreading fear among potential enemies; the Assyrians typically used tactics like blinding captured soldiers and executing their leaders for this purpose, so they were unlikely to be squeamish during the aftermath of an assault.

■ JERUSALEM, 701 BCE

With disease in their camp and dwindling water supplies, the Assyrian army besieging the Jewish capital at Jerusalem finally broke off their siege. This decision ensured the survival of the Jewish state and religion.

■ LELANTINE WAR, c.710–650 BCE

The Lelantine War was fought over control of the Lelantine Plain on the island of Euboea. The principle combatants were Chalkis and Eretria but the conflict drew in many other cities due to their alliances and influence. It is likely that the forces involved included some hoplites, cavalry and chariots, but were primarily composed of lightly equipped swordsmen. The drawn-out conflict greatly diminished the importance of Euboea in Greek affairs.

■ DIYALA RIVER, c.693 BCE

After subjugating Babylonia, the Assyrian Empire launched a campaign against the kingdom of Elam. The decisive clash came at the Diyala river. Assyrian sources hail the battle as a great victory, but more likely it was both costly and inconclusive.

■ HALULE, 691 BCE

Rising in rebellion against the Assyrian Empire, Babylon was joined by allies including the Chaldeans and Elamites as well as several tribal peoples. The Elamite contingent contained cavalry and charioteers as well as infantry. After an indecisive clash in which the Assyrians probably suffered the most casualties, both sides claimed victory but the political situation remained unchanged. Babylon was besieged later in the year, falling after a siege that lasted nine months.

■ ASSYRIAN CAMPAIGNS INTO EGYPT, 668 & 661 BCE

During the reign of King Ashurbanipal, Assyrian armies launched two campaigns into Egypt. The second, in 661 BCE, succeeded in sacking Thebes, and Nubian influence was expelled from Egypt. However, Assyrian control was short-lived.

■ HYSIAE, 669 BCE

A clash between the Greek city-states of Argos and Sparta resulted in defeat for the Spartan army. The rise of Sparta to military pre-eminence in Greece is generally considered to have begun a few years later.

■ ULAI, 652 BCE

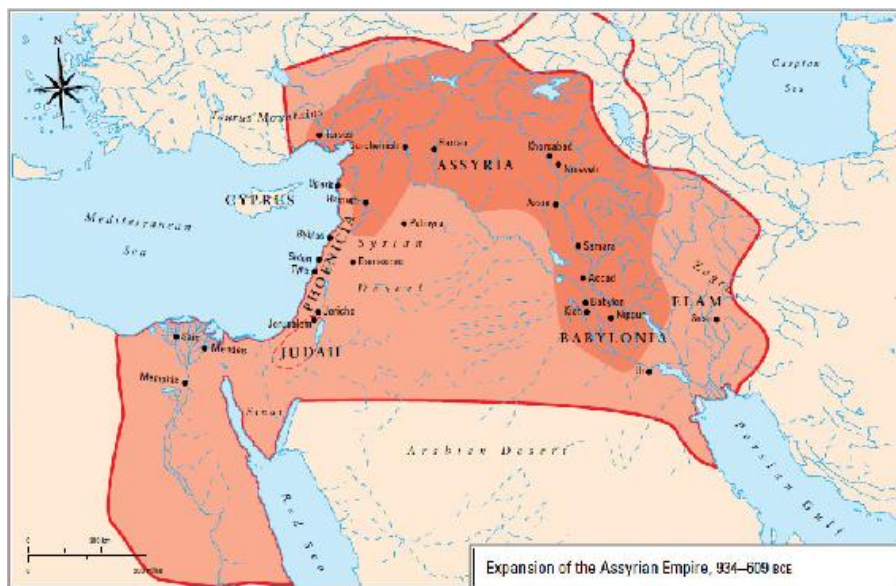
Elam, lying to the east of Mesopotamia, was an ally of Babylon and a threat to the trade routes upon which much of Assyria's power was based. Assyria launched a pre-emptive campaign to eliminate the threat, inflicting a decisive defeat at the River Uлай.

■ SUSA, 647 BCE

Ongoing conflict between the Assyrians and Elamites led to a major clash at Susa. The victorious Assyrians levelled the city and looted its treasures, depicting this act in their records as one of vengeance.

■ ASHDOD, 635 BCE

The city of Ashdod in Palestine was besieged by Egyptian forces for 29 years before finally being taken. Egypt had formerly been dominated by the Assyrian Empire, but had begun to reassert its power.



■ ARRAPHA, 616 BCE

Babylonia revolted against Assyrian rule in 627 BCE and campaigned against the collapsing Assyrian Empire right up until its final destruction. The Babylonians won a significant victory at Arrapha, capturing large numbers of horses and chariots.

■ FALL OF ASSYRIA, 616-605 BCE

After years of war with Babylon and Elam, Assyria was exhausted and unable to respond effectively to pressure from Scythia and Media. Babylon, once more independent, led the final conquest of the Assyrian Empire.

■ FALL OF ASSUR, 614 BCE

After a failed attack on Nineveh, Babylonian forces marched on the old Assyrian capital of Assur. Joined by their Median allies, they laid

siege. Even with the Assyrian army still at Nineveh, the city was able to hold out until 612 BCE.

■ NINEVEH, 612 BCE

The capital of the Assyrian Empire came under siege by combined forces from Babylon, Medea, Elam and Scythia. After a period of vigorous resistance, Nineveh was taken and sacked. The Assyrian King Sin-shar-Ishkur was killed in the fighting.

■ SECOND MEGIDDO, 609 BCE

Marching to the assistance of their Assyrian allies, Egyptian troops entered the kingdom of Judah without permission and were attacked. After defeating the forces of Judah at Megiddo and slaying their king, the Egyptians continued their march.

■ HARRAN, 608 BCE

After the loss of the king at Nineveh, the Assyrian Empire proclaimed one of its generals as King Ashur-Urballit II. He ruled what was left of the Assyrian Empire from Harran, until the city's fall in 608 BCE.

■ CARCHEMISH, 605 BCE

The last remnant of the Assyrian Empire was centred on Carchemish. An Egyptian army, marching to assist its Assyrian allies, was delayed by a battle at Megiddo, but arrived in time to confront the main Babylonian force. The joint army was defeated, bringing the Assyrian Empire to an end. Egypt's power and prestige were also greatly reduced, and Egypt ceased to be a major factor in Mesopotamian affairs while Babylon assumed prominence.

■ HAMA, 605 BCE

Egyptian forces, retreating from their defeat at Carchemish, were caught and attacked by a Babylonian army. The Egyptian army, exhausted from its march, was almost totally annihilated.

■ SIEGE OF KIRRHA, c.590 BCE

The Amphictyonic League was formed to protect the Greek oracle at Delphi. Its forces besieged Kirrha as a result of Kirrhan interference with pilgrims bound for Delphi. Hellebore was used to poison the city's water supply.

■ JERUSALEM, 586 BCE

After displacing Assyria as the major power in the region, the Neo-Babylonian (or Chaldean) Empire expanded its territory at the expense of neighbouring states. Among those overrun was the Jewish kingdom of Judah, whose Egyptian allies abandoned her. Jerusalem withstood the siege for 18 months, but with the population starving, the Jews were forced to attempt a field battle to decide the campaign. They were defeated and Jerusalem fell, with much of the city's population taken as slaves.

■ HALYS, 585 BCE

Fighting between forces from Media and Lydia ended due to an eclipse, which was taken as a bad omen. Since the eclipse can be precisely dated, the battle of Halys can too, making it the earliest battle whose date can be exactly determined.

■ SIEGE OF TYRE, 585–573 BCE

The city of Tyre occupied a very strong position on an island just off the coast. It resisted siege by Babylonian forces for 13 years, but eventually agreed to pay tribute as part of a settlement.

■ EGYPTIAN INVASION OF PALESTINE, 567 BCE

Deposed by General Amasis (Ahmose II), King Apries of Egypt sought refuge at the Babylonian court. He was given a Babylonian army to regain his throne but was defeated by an Egyptian expedition into Palestine.

■ HYRBA, 552 BCE

A force of Persian cavalry and infantry under the command of Cyrus the Great defeated a smaller Median cavalry force. This was the first defeat Media had suffered in some time, and marked the beginning of the Median–Persian war.

■ BATTLE OF THE PERSIAN BORDER, 551 BCE

A Persian army under the command of Cyrus the Great and his father Cambyses I, consisting mainly of cavalry with some chariots, was engaged by a much larger Median force. The Medians were intent on invading the province of Persis and returning it to Median rule, while the Persians hoped to hold them at the border. The Persians offered battle before an unknown city on the Persian–Median border. Despite the disparity in numbers, the Persians inflicted heavy casualties on their opponents and ended the first day of battle undefeated. They then retired southwards, leaving the city lightly held. The Medians captured the city, killing Cambyses in the process, but the Persian army under Cyrus remained a potent force. Cyrus retreated to the capital, where his army prepared to make a final stand against the Medians.

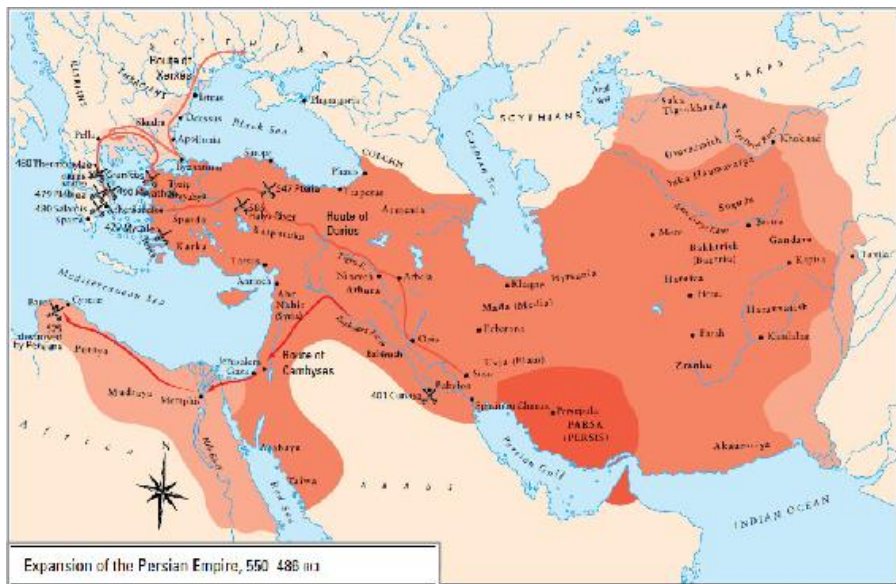
■ BATTLE OF THE FETTERS, 550 BCE

An overconfident Spartan army, carrying fetters with which to bind the captives they intended to take, was heavily defeated by their Arcadian opponents. Many Spartans became prisoners and were bound in their own fetters and shackles.

■ PASARGADAE, 550 BCE

The revolt of Persis against its Median overlords resulted in a lengthy and bloody struggle. Defeated in the field, the Persians under Cyrus the Great retreated to Pasargadae, where they were attacked by a Median army. Cyrus won a decisive victory which established him as overlord of Media, thus creating the Persian Empire. It is thought that

the Medians were able to recruit as many as one million infantry and 200,000 cavalry for this campaign, though smaller numbers took part in the actual fighting. Median casualties were much higher than those suffered by the Persian opponents.



■ PTERIA, 547 BCE

Taking advantage of the defeat of Media by Persia, the Lydians invaded what had been Median territory. The first clash at Pteria was indecisive, but the Lydians chose to retreat, giving strategic victory to the Persians.

■ THYMBRA, 547 BCE

Cyrus the Great deployed his outnumbered Persian forces in a square formation, using camels to disrupt the opposing Lydian cavalry. As the Lydians became disordered, the Persians counter-attacked to win a decisive victory.

■ SIEGE OF SARDIS, 547 BCE

After defeating the Lydians at Thymbra, Cyrus the Great advanced on Sardis. The city fell after a 14-day siege. Lydia was then annexed into the Persian Empire, though it took several more years to put down revolts and pacify the region.

■ 300 CHAMPIONS, 545 BCE

In an effort to minimize casualties, the Greek city-states of Argos and Sparta each agreed to field a force of 300 of their finest warriors against one another. At the end of the battle, only one Spartan champion remained alive against two warriors of Argos. The latter claimed victory and marched home. However, the lone Spartan was left in possession of the battlefield and announced that Sparta had won the battle. This disputed outcome resulted in a full-scale clash

between hoplite armies, which was a decisive victory for Sparta.

■ OPIS, 539 BCE

Cyrus the Great of Persia launched a campaign against the Neo-Babylonian Empire, which required that he penetrate or bypass the Median Wall. This was a fortification constructed to prevent an invasion of Babylonian territory by the Medes from the north. The city of Opis lay at one end of the wall, and offered a good crossing point over the River Tigris. Capturing Opis would offer the Persian army an easy route into the interior of Mesopotamia, allowing a strike at Babylon itself. Babylonia was at that time in decline, contending with severe economic and political problems, but still remained a formidable power. However, the death in battle of the Babylonian commander and heavy casualties inflicted in the ensuing rout broke Babylonian resistance. Once past Opis, Cyrus was able to overrun the rest of Babylonia against minimal resistance.

■ BABYLON, 539–538 BCE

Cyrus the Great of Persia sent an army under one of his subordinate generals to besiege Babylon. This permitted him to take possession of the surrendered city under the guise of a liberator rather than a conqueror.

■ PERSIAN CONQUEST OF EGYPT, 525 BCE

After the death of Cyrus the Great, his empire was further expanded by his son Cambyses II. Brushing aside Egyptian resistance at Pelusium, the Persian army advanced almost unopposed to Memphis, making Egypt a Persian province.

■ PELUSIUM, 525 BCE

The fortified city of Pelusium controlled access to Egypt via the Sinai and Nile Delta. Here, an invading Persian army under Cambyses II was met by Egyptian forces, which were decisively defeated. The city surrendered after the field battle.

China c.2500–200 BCE

■ BANQUAN, c.2500 BCE

The earliest recorded battle in Chinese history occurred at Banquan. Events are unclear, but it seems that the Yellow Emperor's forces defeated those of the Yan Emperor, bringing both groups under a single ruler as the Huaxia.

■ ZOULOU, c.2500 BCE

Soon after the battle of Banquan, the newly formed Huaxia tribes fought the Jiuli tribes over control of the Yellow River valley. The resulting Huaxia victory formed the basis for the Han dynasty, which ruled China after the fall of the Qin Dynasty.

■ MING CHIAO, c.1523 BCE

The Shang Dynasty was the first literate Chinese dynasty and was also notable for the development of bronze metallurgy. Their ascension began with the decisive defeat of the rival Shao Dynasty near Shang Chu in Honan province. The Shang deployed 70 chariots for this battle.

■ MUYE, c.1057 BCE

The Shang Dynasty, which ruled China at this time, became increasingly suspicious and fearful of the Zhou, a people whose king, Wen, had previously been a trusted vassal. As tensions increased, the Zhou began to overrun the territory of Shang allies, although they took care not to provoke the Shang. By 1046 BCE, the Shang had become heavy-handed and unpopular rulers and a revolt by the Zhou was viewed favourably by much of the populace. Although a sizable force was available to defend the capital, Yin, the Shang ruler, distributed weapons to thousands of slaves. Not only did most of the slaves immediately swap sides, so too did many Shang troops. Of the remainder, some stood aside and refused to fight for their unpopular ruler, and the rest were overrun in a bloody battle. Victory established the Zhou Dynasty as rulers of China.

■ RUGE, 707 BCE

A dispute between the Zhou kingdom and Count Zheng over a land deal concluded without Zhou's approval, resulted in a failed Zhou campaign into Zheng. The decisive battle became known as the battle of Ruge and served to underscore the declining prestige of the Zhou Dynasty.

■ CHENGPU, 632 BCE

The ruling Zhou Dynasty held direct control over only a fairly small area, with the remainder of China divided up between feudal lords

and princes. Zhou dominance over these nobles was at times tenuous and gradually grew weaker. Some states, notably in the south, proclaimed independence while others fragmented into civil wars. The states of Jin and Chu became engaged in a series of increasingly direct conflicts, each attempting to draw allies away from the other state. This situation culminated in an invasion of Song, an ally of Jin, and a counterstroke against Wei and Cao, allies of Chu. The Jin army then encamped on the Wei–Cao border and awaited Chu's next move. The Jin army is said to have protected its chariot horses with tiger skins. Their tactics were sophisticated, using chariots for a rapid advance and switching the main axis of attack as necessary. Thus, when the Chu arrived, the Jin advanced on both flanks, making the main effort against the Chu right. This extremely aggressive attack was successful, breaking the forces opposite it. The Jin exploited this advantage by using their victorious left-flank force to make holding attacks against the Chu centre, preventing it from interfering as the Chu left was drawn into a trap. Here, the Jin had advanced to skirmish, then pulled back to draw the Chu forward. Chariots dragging branches were used to throw up dust and conceal the fact that the Jin were re-forming their lines. As the Chu left wing advanced, it was taken in the flank by chariots and frontally attacked by the reformed Jin. The centre, pinned in place by attacks from the front and threats from the flank, could not assist and the Chu left was smashed. With both flanks in tatters, facing an intact Jin force, the Chu centre retired from the field.



■ BI, 595 BCE

Skirmishing between Jin and Chu forces went badly for the Jin, who sent out a chariot force to assist. This brought about a more general engagement in which the Jin were flanked by Chu chariots and forced to withdraw by their more nimble opponents.

■ YANLING, 575 BCE

Continued conflict between Chu and Jin resulted in a clash at Yanling. Correctly predicting that the Chu would place their best troops in the centre of the line, the Jin attacked on the flanks and broke the weaker forces there.

■ BAI JU (BOJU) c.506 BCE

The state of Wu, sponsored by Jin as an ally against Chu, grew in power until it was able to challenge Chu directly. Forces led by the great military thinker Sun Tzu were temporarily able to occupy the Chu capital at Ying.

■ LIZE, 478 BCE

The state of Yue, to the south of Wu, was less significant than its northern neighbour until its forces inflicted a defeat at Lize and captured considerable territory. Yue became a major power in the region for several decades as a result of this campaign.

■ JINYANG, 453 BCE

The army of Zhao was besieged in Jinyang by the forces of Zhi, Wei and Han for three years until, desperate, the Zhao sent emissaries to the Wei and Han. Mistrusting their Zhi allies, these forces consented to change sides. The result was a crushing defeat for Zhi.

■ GUILING, 353 BCE

Forces from Qi and Zhao attacked the Wei capital, pulling Wei troops away from their own siege of the Zhao capital. Tired from the march and from crossing the Yellow River, the Wei army was ambushed at Guiling.

■ MALING, 342 BCE

The army of Qi retired in the face of an advance by Wei forces, engaging in a stratagem to draw the Wei into an ambush. The Qi commander ordered his troops to light fewer cooking fires each day, giving the impression that a portion of his army was deserting. Some artillery was also abandoned. Convinced that the Qi army was disintegrating, the Wei pursued recklessly and were ambushed in a narrow pass.

■ YIQUE, 293 BCE

Exploiting divisions within the Wei–Han alliance, Qin forces drew off Han troops with raids, then attacked the main Wei army. The subsequent defeat broke the alliance, allowing the Qin to defeat the Wei and Han separately.

■ CHANPING, 260 BCE

A Zhou force numbering about 400,000 men was drawn out by the retreating Qin, then cut off and besieged in its field fortifications. Unable to escape, the Zhou surrendered after 46 days. A large-scale massacre of prisoners followed, fatally weakening the Zhou.

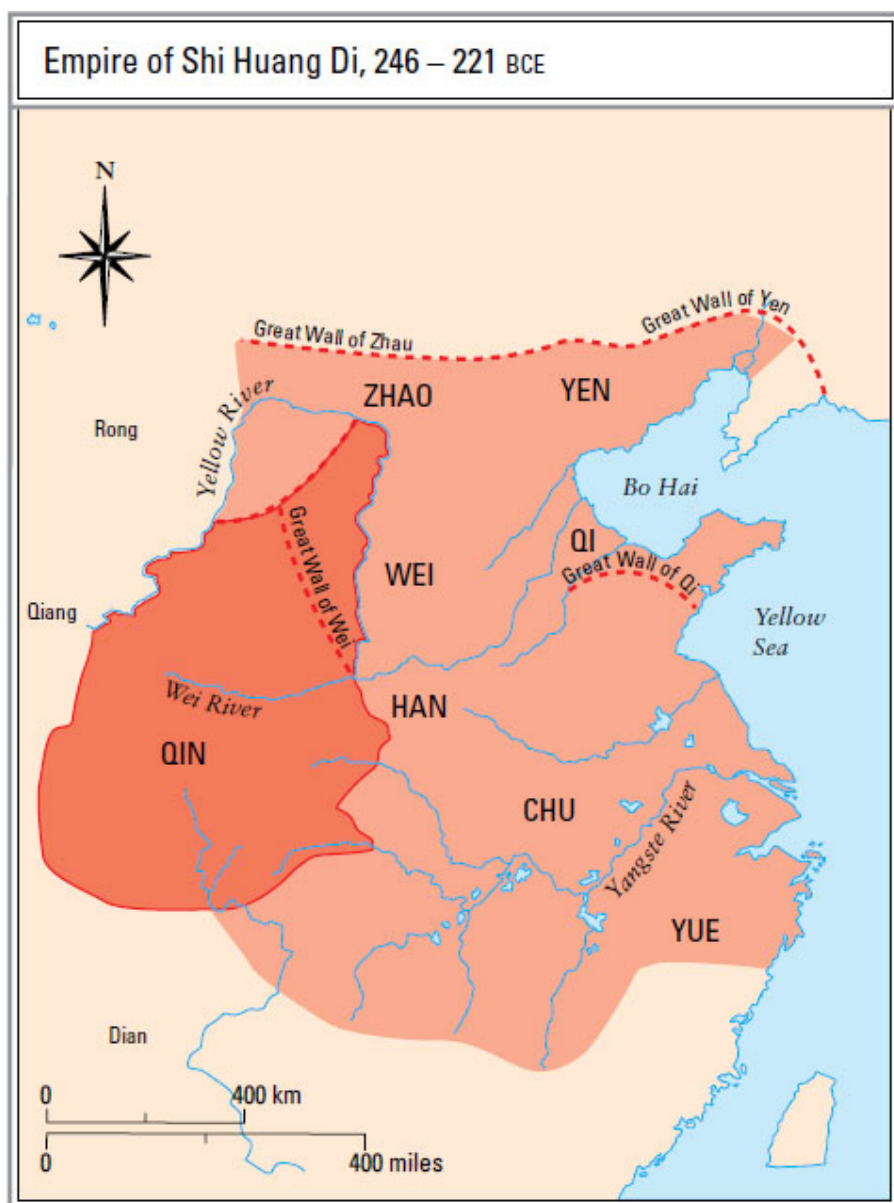
■ CONQUEST OF ZHOU BY QIN, 229–222 BCE

Zhou was one of the ‘Seven Great Powers’ of the Warring States Period, but gradually declined as the years went by. Neighbouring Qin conquered the state of Han in 230 BCE, then turned on Zhou. Zhou’s ablest generals were relieved or dismissed due to internal politics and

Qin infiltration, and the Zhou army was badly outmatched. As a result the state fell to the Qin, bringing the Zhou dynasty to an end.

■ CONQUEST OF YAN BY QIN, 227–222 BCE

Qin forces serving King Zheng overran the province of Yan after destroying Zhou. Although the Yan were assisted by the last remnants of the Zhou army, they were unable to prevent total defeat. After mopping up the remaining resistance, King Zheng proclaimed himself first emperor of a unified China and set about a programme of construction and improvements that included a standardized system of weights and measures.

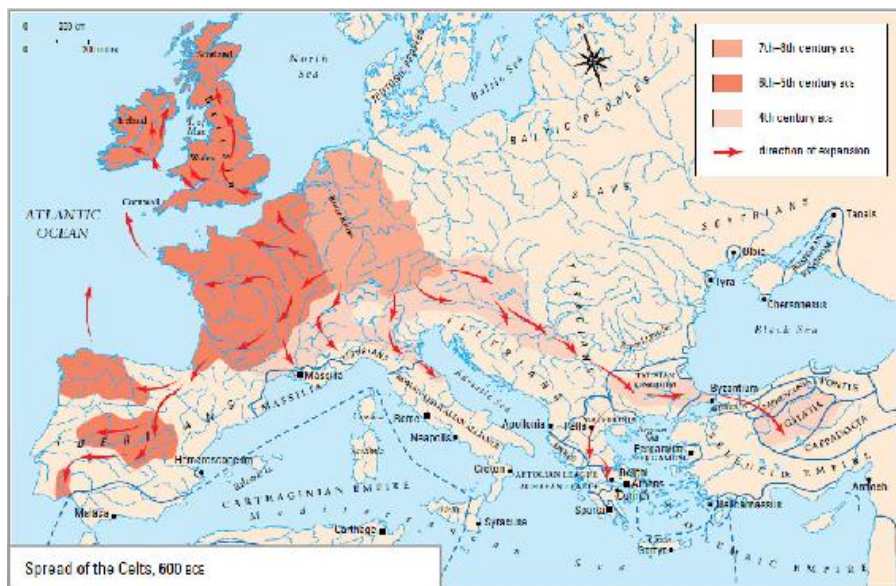


■ QIN CONQUEST OF CHU, 226–223 BCE

After a year-long standoff, the massive Chu army became disaffected while the Qin secretly continued to make preparations for an assault. The weakened Chu force was defeated in a lengthy campaign, bringing the region under Qin control.

■ UNIFICATION OF CHINA, 222–221 BCE

The Qin overran Zhou in 222 BCE and advanced into Yan territory. Despite desperate measures, including an attempt to murder the Qin king, Yan was also briskly conquered. In 221 BCE the state of Qi surrendered, having taken no part in resisting Qin expansion. Qin was the last of the Warring States to be subjugated, ending the period and beginning Qin Dynasty rule over a unified China.



Ireland 2530 BCE

■ MAGH ITHE, 2530 BCE

The earliest known battle in Ireland was fought between 800 Formorian invaders and an unknown number of local warriors. The *Annals of the Four Masters* record that all of the invaders were killed.

South & South-East Asia 1500–1 BCE

■ KURUSHETRA WAR, ESTIMATED DATE VARIES 5561–800 BCE

According to the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, the Kurushetra War was an 18-day clash of huge armies, fighting over the throne of Hastinapur. Forces from all over India fought on both sides of the conflict, with almost all of the thousands of participants killed in the battle. Although very detailed in some places, the epic does not give clear and verifiable dates for the conflict, and cannot be taken as an accurate and detailed account of the fighting and the tactics actually used. It does, however, give a general picture of how wars were fought in India in antiquity.

■ DARIUS ON THE INDUS, 517–509 BCE

Darius I of Persia mounted a successful campaign eastwards into the Indus valley, overrunning the valley and the region now known as the Punjab. The campaign resulted in greater awareness of the incredible riches of India, causing an upsurge in trade and an increasingly cultural interchange between South-East Asia and the Middle East.

■ HYDASPES, 326 BCE

Alexander the Great's campaign eastwards brought him into conflict with King Porus of Paurava. Alexander's army won a costly victory over King Porus, but refused to go any further east than the Hydaspes river, forcing Alexander to curtail his ambitions.

Messenian Wars 743–668 BCE

■ AMPHEIA, 743 BCE

War between Sparta and Messenia arose out of increasing tensions and an incident at the temple of Artemis Limnatis, over which both sides accused one another of treachery. The first serious clash was a surprise Spartan attack on Ampheia, whose population was massacred.

■ ITHOME, c.740 BCE

Messenia managed to avoid losing any more cities to the Spartans for several years, but after failing to defeat their Spartan opponents in the field, the Messenians retired to the natural fortress of Mount Ithome.

■ ITHOME, 724 BCE

Hearing that the Messenians had obtained divine assistance from the Oracle at Delphi, the Spartans were hesitant to attack until they obtained advice of their own from the Oracle. The Messenian king was killed in the ensuing indecisive battle.

■ DERES, 685 BCE

The Greek city-state of Sparta conquered and enslaved the Messenians in a war lasting from 743 to 724 BCE. The Messenians revolted, bringing about the Second Messenian War as they sought independence. The first action of this war was the battle of Deres, fought in response to a Messenian invasion of Laconia, the region around Sparta. The outcome of the battle remains unclear, though subsequently the Messenians continued their advance into Spartan territory.

■ GREAT FOSS, 682 BCE

The Messenians suffered an overwhelming defeat. Reputedly, this occurred because the Spartans bribed the Messenians' allies to withdraw at a critical moment. It is not clear what role the great foss (trench) played in the battle.

■ MOUNT EIRA, c.668 BCE

The Messenians retired to a fortified city at Mount Eira, from which they launched raids against Spartan territory. Eventually the Spartans stormed the city and enslaved those who were not killed. Some Messenians fled to Italy.

Battles of Early Rome/Italy 509–275 BCE

■ LAKE REGILLUS, 509–493 BCE

The Roman forces, like their Latin League opponents, fought in the manner of Greek hoplites. The battle was decided by the intervention of dismounted Roman cavalry, who restored a deteriorating situation and eventually forced a Latin retreat.

■ ROME, 509 BCE

The Roman Republic came about as a result of the violent overthrow of King Tarquin the Proud, who attempted to regain his throne with Etruscan assistance. It is thought that Rome was besieged by Tarquin's forces, though few details are known.

■ TIBER RIVER, 508 BCE

Some accounts claim that the Etruscans did not besiege Rome, but were halted at the River Tiber. After breaking the Roman army in a field battle, the Etruscans tried to pursue them across the Pons Sublicius, but were single-handedly prevented from crossing by Publius Horatius Cocles.

■ CREMERA, 477 BCE

Roman forces established a fortress on the River Cremera, from which they were able to curtail raids from the city of Veii. They were eventually enticed out of their fortifications by a ruse, and ambushed by Veii troops.

■ MONS ALGIDUS, 458 BCE

A Roman army facing forces of the Aequi tribe became trapped, with the enemy building fortifications surrounding it. In turn, a relief force commanded by Cincinnatus encircled the Aequi, who succumbed to assault from two sides.

■ CORBIONE, 446 BCE

Rome gradually increased its dominance over the local tribes. Having defeated the Aequi at Mons Algidus, this second victory consolidated Roman control over the region. Few details of the action itself have survived.

■ SECOND VEIENTINE WAR, 438–425 BCE

The city of Veii was a frequent opponent of early Rome. Conflict arose over control of the Tiber crossing at Fidenae, resulting in a series of battles. After Rome captured and secured Fidenae, the war went against Veii and a truce was agreed.



■ FIDENAE, 435 BCE

The originally Etruscan city of Fidenae changed hands several times in the war between Rome and Veii. In 435 BCE it was conquered by the Romans and, with the defeat of Veii, permanently thereafter remained a Roman possession.

■ VEII, 396 BCE

The expiry of the long truce between Rome and Veii did not immediately result in hostilities, but a deteriorating diplomatic situation caused a declaration of war in 405 BCE. Veii was besieged, unsuccessfully at first, for a decade, while Roman forces fought

campaigns elsewhere. Final victory was achieved by means of a tunnel with a concealed entrance. This enabled a Roman assault force to enter the city while other forces simultaneously rushed the walls.

■ ALLIA, 390 BCE

Responding to a Gallic invasion of Italy, a Roman army of six legions met the Gauls at the River Allia. The Romans were overrun by the more numerous Gauls, who marched on Rome and sacked it. These events prompted major changes in the Roman military system.

■ MOUNT GAURUS, 352 BCE

A request for Roman aid against the Samnite tribe by the people of Campania sparked off the First Samnite War. The first clash, near the base of Mount Gaurus, was a clear victory for Rome but did not end the war.

■ SUESSULA, 341 BCE

A second battle with the Samnites also resulted in a Roman victory, but little advantage could be derived from it. Instead, a peace settlement was quickly agreed to free Roman forces to deal with a revolt by their Latin allies.

■ VESUVIUS (OR VESERIS), 339 BCE

Displeased that Rome had entered into a war with the Samnites without consulting them, Rome's Latin allies revolted. The two forces met at Mount Vesuvius, where the Latins were heavily defeated.

■ TRIFANUM, 338 BCE

Rome's Latin foes retreated north after their defeat at Vesuvius, receiving reinforcements as they went. The Roman army advanced after them, bringing about a disorganized encounter battle at Trifanum. The Latins suffered worse from the surprise attack and were defeated.

■ NEAPOLIS, 327 BCE

The seizure of Neapolis by the Samnites resulted in the outbreak of the Second Samnite War. Initial Roman successes caused the Samnites to ask for terms, but those offered were so harsh that they were rejected, resulting in an intermittent 20-year war.

■ CAUDINE FORKS, 321 BCE

The Roman army fell victim to disinformation planted by Samnite agents and was lured into advancing through a narrow mountain defile. Finding the road ahead barricaded against them, the Romans turned back only to find they were now trapped. The Samnites debated whether to slaughter the trapped Romans or release them as a gesture of reconciliation. Instead, they compelled the Roman army to surrender under humiliating terms that virtually guaranteed further hostilities.

■ LAUTULAE, 316 BCE

Forced to accept a five-year truce after the surrender at the Caudine Forks, Rome expanded its military forces and resumed hostilities as soon as it could. The first clash of the renewed war was at Lautulae, where the Samnites inflicted a decisive defeat.

■ **VADIMO, 310 BCE**

War between Rome and the Etruscans began with an Etruscan attack on the city of Sutrium. The decisive clash of the war came at Lake Vadimo, on a narrow and restricted battlefield. Dismounted Roman cavalry turned the battle around after both sides ran out of infantry reserves.

■ **BOVANUM, 305 BCE**

Although hard-pressed and having to fight the Etruscans as well as the Samnites, Rome gradually gained the upper hand in the Second Samnite War and inflicted a decisive defeat at Bovanium. It is possible that the concept of the manipular legion came from the Samnites' military system.



■ CAMERINUM, 298 BCE

The Third Samnite War began with the Samnites invading Roman territory. Their allies, including Etruscans and Gauls, also made war on Rome at the same time. Despite this, the first clash at Camerinum was a Roman victory.

■ TIFERNUM, 297 BCE

After failing to draw the Romans into an ambush, the Samnite army advanced for a set-piece field battle. A Roman flanking force was mistaken for a large contingent of reinforcements by both sides, causing a Samnite defeat that the Romans were too exhausted to

exploit.

■ **SENTINUM, 295 BCE**

Outnumbered by the Samnites and their Etruscan and Gallic allies, the Romans sent off a small diversionary force that succeeded in pulling away the Etruscan contingent. After a hard-fought battle, the Romans broke the Samnites then fell on the Gauls from the flank.

■ **AQUILONIA, 293 BCE**

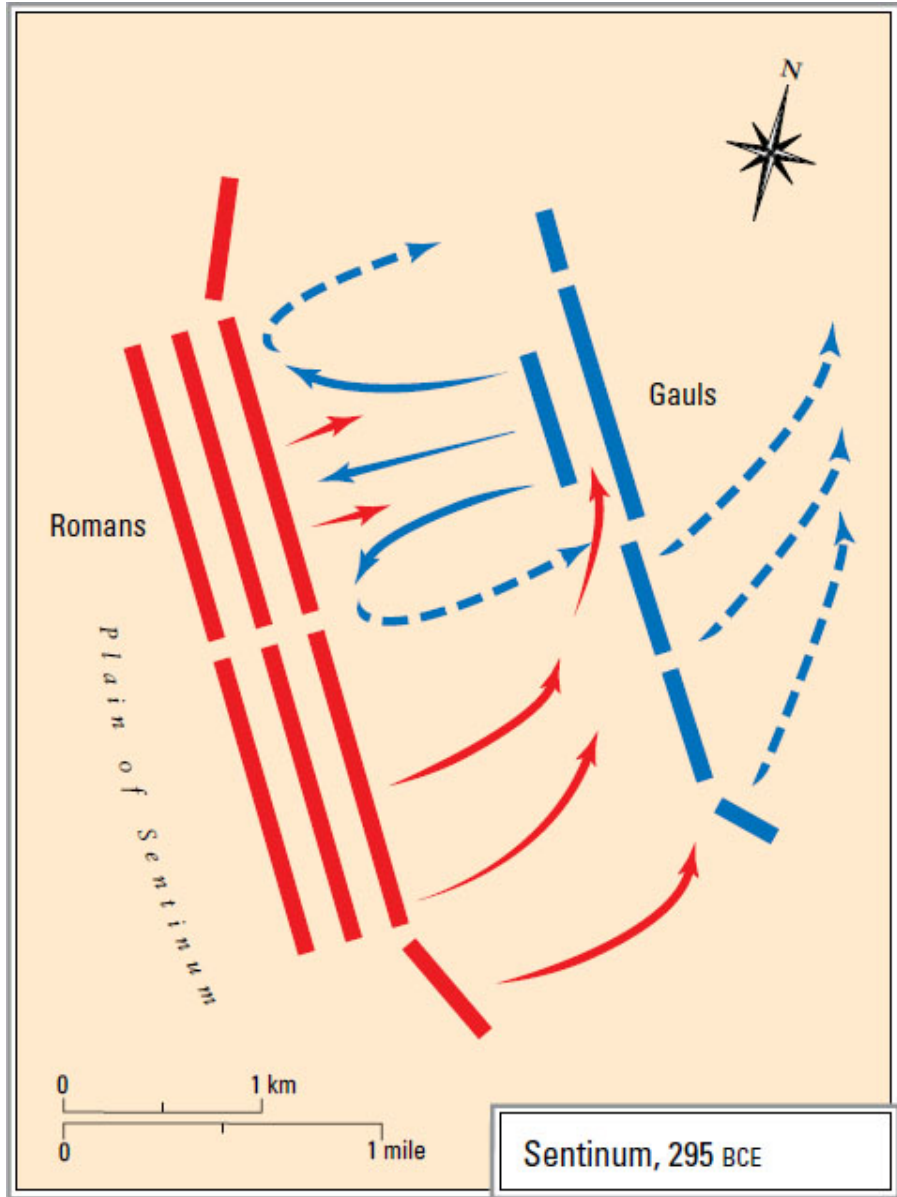
Scraping together a new army, the Samnites mustered at Aquilonia. They were able to withstand Roman attack for some time, but began to waver in the mistaken belief that Roman reinforcements were approaching. Rout soon followed, ending the Third Samnite war with a Roman victory.

■ **ARRETIVM, 284 BCE**

Various Celtic tribes lived in Italy, notably the Boii and the Senones. The latter had clashed with Rome previously, suffering a defeat alongside the Samnites at Sentium. The Celts attacked Arretium, causing a Roman army to march to its relief. The army was defeated and its commander and seven military tribunes were killed. Encouraged by this, the Celts reforged old alliances with the Etruscans and began an invasion of Roman territory.

■ **VADIMO, 283 BCE**

A joint force of Etruscan troops and Boii tribesmen met a Roman army near Lake Vadimo and was defeated. Some of the Boii may have been driven eastwards into the Danube region; others settled in northern Italy and accepted Roman rule.



■ POPULONIA, 282 BCE

Despite earlier defeats, the Etruscans continued their campaign against Rome. The battle of Populonia was a decisive Roman victory, finally ending the Etruscan threat to Rome.

Carthaginian & Sicilian Wars 650–300 BCE

■ CARTHAGINIAN CONQUESTS, 650–500 BCE

Carthage was a Phoenician colony which became independent in 650 BCE. Its location on the North African coast close to Sicily was ideal for sea trade, allowing a rapid increase in power. Many small campaigns were fought to protect the trade routes or against potential rivals, until in 509 BCE a treaty was agreed with Rome that divided the Mediterranean into Roman and Carthaginian spheres of interest. In the intervening time, Carthage fought off Greek forays into the western Mediterranean and conquered territories in Iberia, Sicily and Sardinia. Wars were also fought with the neighbouring Libyans and Numidians, but did not result in conquest.

■ ALALIA, 540 BCE

Dominance of the western Mediterranean by the Etruscans and Carthaginians was challenged by the arrival of Greek traders and colonists starting around 750 BCE. As a result, by 540 BCE an alliance between Etruscan cities and Carthage existed, aimed at curbing Greek expansion. A major clash between the Greek and Allied fleets occurred at Alalia. Although the allies did not win an outright victory, they caused sufficient damage that the Greeks withdrew and evacuated their holdings on Corsica.

■ HIMERA, 480 BCE

Fearing that Sicily would soon be completely dominated by Greek interests, Carthage sent troops to assist the deposed tyrant of Himera. The Carthaginians were attacked in their camp by a Greek force and defeated, beginning a period of truce.

■ CUMAE, 474 BCE

The cities of Cumae and Syracuse, originally founded by Greek settlers, were extremely powerful in the western Mediterranean. Their economies were largely based on sea trade and both maintained powerful fleets to protect their interests. The rising power of the Etruscan civilization led to conflict, and in 474 BCE a joint Cumae–Syracuse fleet defeated an Etruscan force. The Etruscans lost prestige as well as the economic benefits of sea trade, contributing to a decline that eventually led to absorption by Rome.

■ HIMERA, 409 BCE

A Greek relief army surprised and routed Carthaginians besieging the city. This force was in turn defeated by a Carthaginian counterattack. False information caused the defenders to pull troops out of the city, which was then successfully assaulted.

■ AKRAGAS, 406 BCE

The Carthaginian army laid siege to Akragas, which was well provisioned and prepared. During the siege, a relief army from Syracuse arrived and drove off the Carthaginian force sent to prevent its approach. A standoff then ensued, with the Carthaginians suffering constant harassment by light Greek forces. The capture of a Greek convoy by Carthaginian naval forces solved the Carthaginians' increasing supply problems and deprived Akragas of badly needed grain. Many of the Greek troops were sent away due to lack of supplies, and the city was all but abandoned. The remnant was easily overcome by a Carthaginian assault.

■ GELA, 405 BCE

Syracusan forces attempted a complex three-pronged land and sea attack on a Carthaginian army besieging Gela. Coordination was poor, resulting in a defeat that forced the Greeks to abandon Gela and retire towards Camarina.

■ CAMARINA, 405 BCE

Retreating from defeat at Gela, the Syracusan leader Dionysius decided not to risk becoming besieged at Camarina and ordered the city abandoned. Morale in the Greek army plunged as a result, forcing Dionysius to seek a peace settlement with Carthage.

■ MOTYA, 398 BCE

The city of Motya lay on an island in a lagoon, forcing the Greek besiegers to build a mole towards the city. A Carthaginian fleet attempted to intervene, but was driven off. The city was then taken after savage urban combat lasting several days.

■ CATANA, 398 BCE

The Carthaginian fleet was attacked by a Greek force that was lesser in numbers but possessed better and heavier ships. The Greek admiral launched a reckless attack with part of his fleet, causing considerable damage at first. However, these vessels became surrounded and were defeated, with the survivors driven off. The Carthaginians reordered their formation and attacked the now leaderless and confused Greek fleet, inflicting a major defeat.

■ MESSENE, 397 BCE

The army of Messene marched out to confront the Carthaginians short of the city, but was outflanked by an amphibious movement. By the time the army returned, the city was in Carthaginian hands.

■ SYRACUSE, 397–396 BCE

The Carthaginian army encircled Syracuse and began ravaging the surrounding countryside to deny the city provisions. It was hoped that this might draw out a Syracusan force for battle. When this did not occur, the Carthaginians began preparations for a long siege. Although

repeated raids made some progress against outlying parts of the city, plague weakened the Carthaginians and Syracusan counter-attacks forced a negotiated withdrawal.

■ SOLUS (SOLUNTUM), 396 BCE

The city of Soluntum resisted Greek influences early in its history and remained loyal to Carthage during the Sicilian Wars. In 396 BCE it was taken by Syracuse through treachery, but reverted to Carthaginian allegiance soon after.

■ ELLEPORUS, 389 BCE

The Italiote League, dominated by Tarentum, was formed of Greek settlements in southern Italy. An expedition led by Dionysius I of Syracuse defeated the League at the River Elleporus (modern Stilaro), bringing it under the control of Syracuse.

■ RHEGIUM, 386 BCE

Having defeated the Italiote League in battle at the Elleporus, Syracusan forces laid siege to the city of Rhegium, just across the Strait of Messina opposite Sicily. The city was captured and sacked, with the population sold into slavery.

■ CABALA, 378–375 BCE

Little is known about the battle of Cabala, not even the exact location. Allegedly the Syracusans won a victory over Carthage, in which some 15,000 Carthaginians including Mago II were killed or captured.

■ LILYBAEUM, 368 BCE

After the Greek sack of Motya, the Carthaginians built the city of Lilybaeum as their principal base on Sicily. The city was strongly defended, coming under siege by Greek forces in 368 BCE.

■ CRISSIMUS, 341 BCE

The vastly outnumbered Greeks attacked a Carthaginian army as it crossed the River Crissimus, first disordering them with a cavalry charge then following up with infantry. The Carthaginians were heavily defeated despite their numerical advantage.

■ AKRAGAS, 315 BCE

After capturing Messene, Syracusan forces advanced on Akragas and besieged it, hoping to remove the last Carthaginian holdings from Sicily. The Carthaginian response was direct and highly successful, pushing the Syracusans all the way back to their capital.

■ CARTHAGE, c.309–307 BCE

With Syracuse under siege, its tyrant Agathocles launched a campaign against Carthage itself. Although this was ultimately defeated, it did cause most of the Carthaginian army to be recalled, saving Syracuse from defeat.

■ HIMERA, 311 BCE

Syracuse caused the Third Sicilian War by violating the treaty that

ended the second war and invading Carthaginian-controlled territory on Sicily. The Carthaginian response was to move an army into Sicily for a campaign against Syracuse. Carthage won a decisive victory at the battle of Himera in 311 BCE and, by the following year, had pushed the Syracusans all the way back to their capital, which was brought under siege. The war ended with a settlement that preserved Syracuse, though with greatly diminished power, and enabled Carthage to enjoy almost complete domination of Sicily and the surrounding sea lanes for several decades. The war had never been a clash of cultures, but was motivated primarily by the protection of commercial interests. Thus Carthage emerged as the clear victor despite not destroying her opponent.

Greek & Greco-Persian Wars 499–450 BCE

■ NAXOS, 499 BCE

The city of Miletus was one of many Greek colonies founded in Ionia and later conquered by the Persian Empire. Its ruler in 499 BCE

was the Persian satrap Aristagoras. Feeling that his position was threatened by local politics, Aristagoras decided to intervene in a revolt on the island of Naxos. This action would obtain a forward base for the Persian invasion of Greece, greatly enhancing Aristagoras' status and securing his position. Aristagoras' ally Artaphernes supplied a fleet and a general in return for a share of the spoils. Disputes over command precedence caused the Persian general to betray the mission's intentions, allowing the people of Naxos to prepare a defence. As a result, what was envisaged as a short war of conquest turned into a four-month struggle of attrition before the Persians retreated. Aristagoras' prestige was further diminished.

■ EPHEBUS, 499 BCE

Disgraced and in debt to his former ally Artaphernes, Aristagoras of Miletus risked being deposed as a result of his bungled invasion of Naxos. In desperation he turned against Persia and incited the whole of Ionia to revolt. The campaign initially went well, with Ionian troops capturing and burning Sardis. However, as the Ionian force retired, it was caught at Ephesus by a large force of Persian cavalry and routed.

■ SARDIS, 498 BCE

Forces from the states of Athens and Eretria and the Ionian rebels assembled at Ephesus and launched an attack on Sardis, which turned out to be weakly defended. Although the city was taken, the Greeks fell back rather than face a Persian relief army.

■ LADE, 494 BCE

After several years of revolt, Persian fortunes had waxed and waned, with a heavy defeat at Pedasus offsetting successes elsewhere. Reorganizing their forces, the Persians launched a major offensive directly at Miletus in the hope of striking a knockout blow to the rebellion. The rebels assembled a fleet of over 350 triremes off the island of Lade to try to counter the strong Persian force.

A standoff ensued, during which the Persians made secret agreements with some of the rebel contingents. As the battle commenced, the Samian force deserted the rebel lines, causing other contingents also to flee. What remained of the rebel army, notably the Chians, put up a stiff fight despite the chaos their line had fallen into. The rebels managed to capture several Persian ships but were eventually forced to break off, opening the way for an attack on

Miletus.

■ SIEGE OF MILETUS, 494 BCE

With the rebel fleet cleared out of the way, the Persian army laid siege to Miletus. The walls were breached by undermining and the use of an extensive siege train. Much of the populace was enslaved or put to the sword.

■ SEPIEA, 494 BCE

A Spartan army under Kleomenes I inflicted a decisive defeat on Argos, causing 6000 casualties and cementing Sparta's position as the dominant power in the Peloponnese. Kleomenes then attempted to become a tyrant in Sparta, leading to civil war.

■ NAXOS, 490 BCE

Although the final goal of the operation was an invasion of mainland Greece, Persian forces first landed on Naxos, whose inhabitants had resisted a previous Persian expedition. The large Persian army quickly overwhelmed all resistance.

■ ERETRIA, 490 BCE

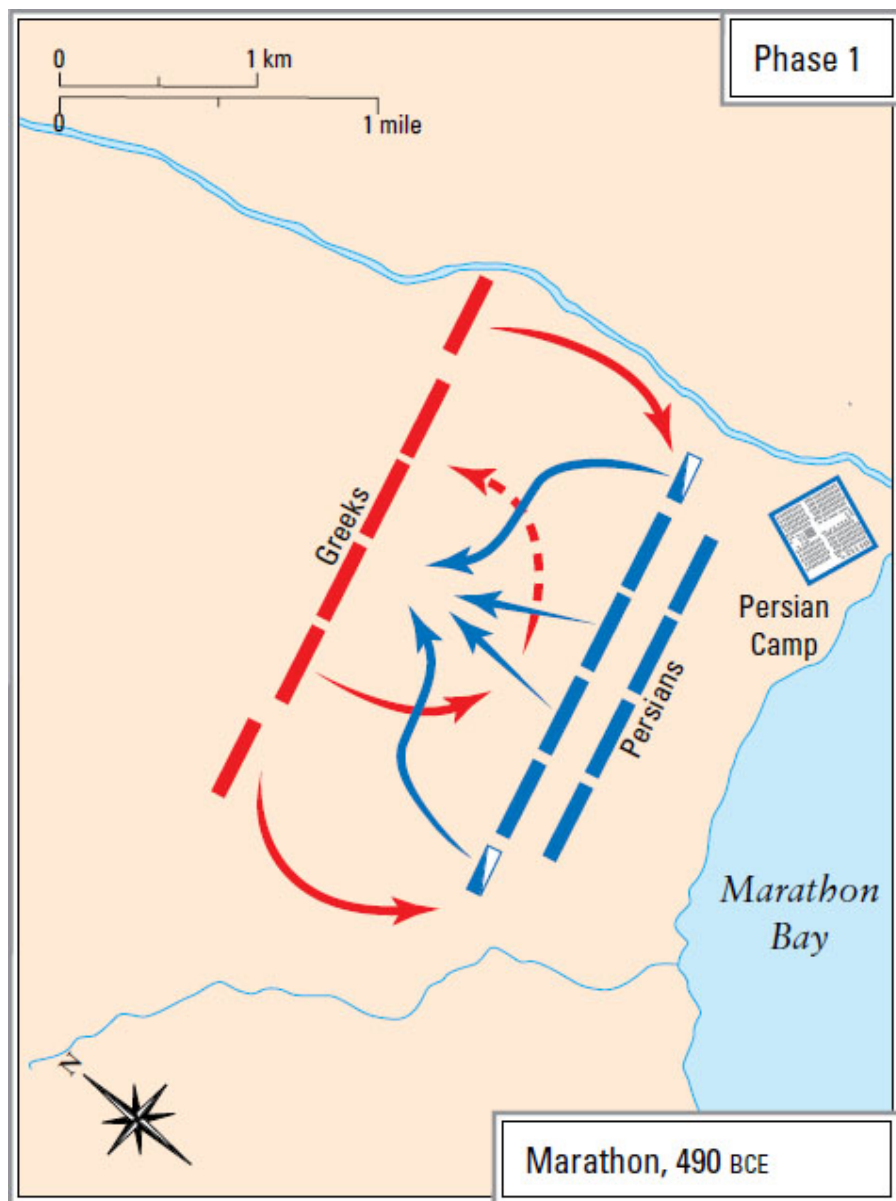
Unable to face the large Persian army in the field, the Eretrians retired behind their walls. Persian forces prosecuted the siege aggressively and after heavy fighting the gates were opened to them.

■ MARATHON, 490 BCE

The Ionian Revolt was something of a prelude to major war between the Persian Empire and the cities of Greece. Starting in 492 BCE, Persian forces captured several Aegean islands. They then landed on the island of Euboea and captured the city of Eretria, which had sided with the Ionian rebels. Euboea was an excellent forward base for operations against the Greek mainland, and from there the Persian force landed at Marathon. A Greek army from Athens was sent to oppose them and took up a blocking position between Marathon and Athens, about 40km distant. Sparta agreed to send a force to help the Athenians, but this was delayed by religious observances. While the Greeks waited, they were joined by allies from Plataea. Although this improved the numerical odds, the main problem facing the Greeks was tactical. Their heavy infantry was suited to a slow, deliberate advance that would make them an easy target for the Persian cavalry, who were armed with missile weapons.

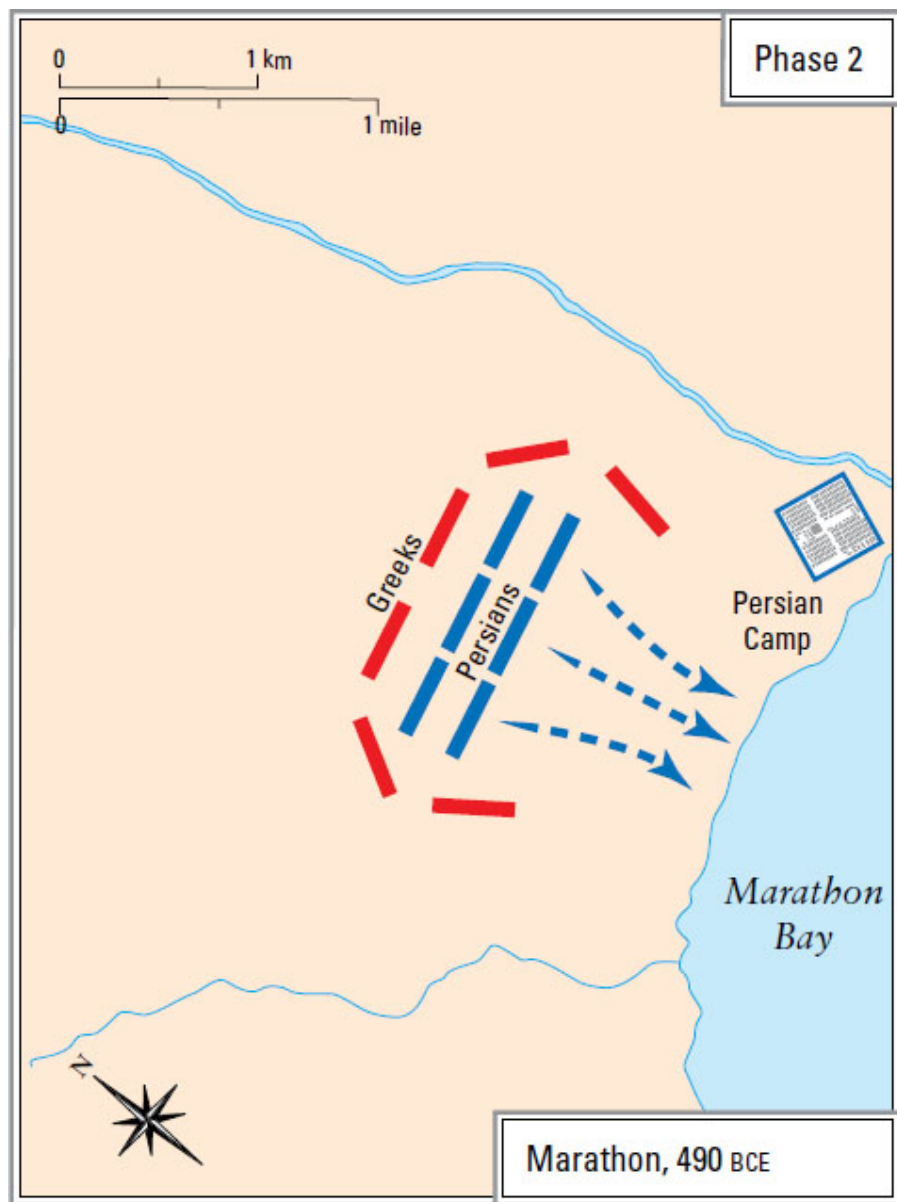
The Greeks learned that the Persian cavalry would not be available for a time, though accounts differ regarding why this was so. Some historians have suggested that the Persians had begun re-embarking their forces for a move up the coast to attack the Athenian port at Phaleron. Others state that Persian deserters told the Greeks that the Persian cavalry was away on some mission. Within the Greek camp some leaders favoured a withdrawal to the defences of Athens, while

others wanted to attack. According to Herodotus, the Greek general Miltiades argued that a withdrawal would shake the morale of the army and the citizens of Athens, possibly leading to surrender. There are also suggestions that the Greeks were swayed by favourable omens. Whatever the reason, they decided to attack without waiting for the Spartan contingent.



In order to match the length of the Persian line, the Greeks drew up in a dangerously thin formation that was stronger on the wings than in the centre. They then began to advance at a run. This almost

suicidally reckless charge covered about 1.6km to strike the Persian line.



It may be that the rapid Greek advance caught the Persians by surprise and denied them time to form a solid battle line. The thin centre made little progress and was soon engaged in a losing battle against the Persians. However, the more powerful wings were more successful and broke their opponents. As the Persian flanking forces fled, the Greek wings then enveloped the Persian centre, forcing the rest of the Persian line to flee towards the beach. There, some of the

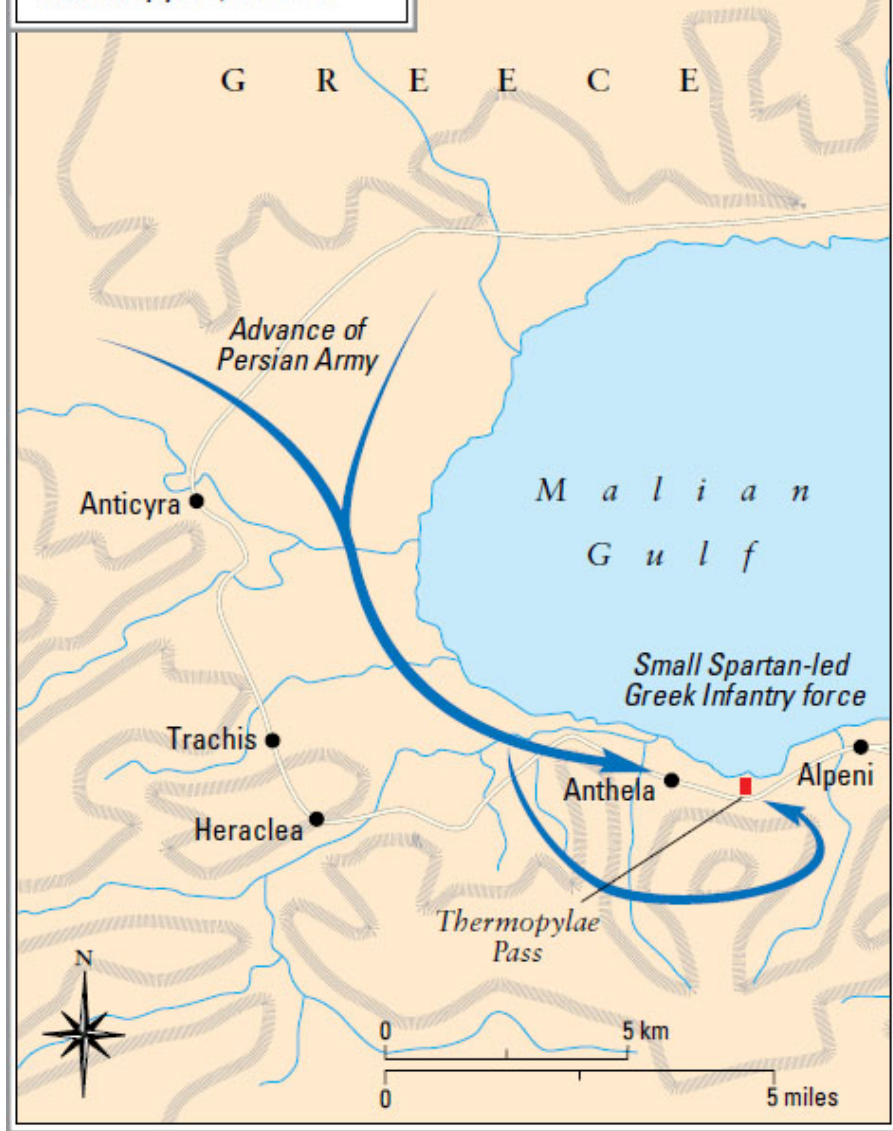
Persians fought a rearguard action to allow the rest of their army to hurriedly embark. Most of the Persian ships escaped, although casualties were heavy among the troops. Sailing along the coast, the Persians considered an attack on Phaleron but were deterred by the obvious readiness of the Greek army to meet any new landing. The fleet withdrew to Persia, bringing the attempted invasion to an end.

The legend of Philippides, who ran to Athens with news of the victory, arose from this conflict but is untrue. Its origins probably lie in the story of Pheidippides, the messenger to Sparta who carried the request for aid, or possibly the rapid march of the Athenian army back from Marathon to oppose the threatened landing at Phaleron.

■ THERMOPYLAE, 480 BCE

For ten years after the defeat at Marathon, Persia made no serious attempts to invade Greece. This situation was largely due to revolts in other areas, notably Egypt. Once the internal situation was stabilized, extensive preparations began for a renewed invasion of Greece. A Greek alliance was formed to counter the threat of invasion, which could come by two routes. The narrow pass at Thermopylae was a suitable point to block the Greek advance on land, but it could be flanked by sea. Both points had to be held for either to be effective. Thus an Athenian-led fleet was deployed to the straits at Artemisium while an army marched to hold Thermopylae. This force was led by Sparta, which could not send its full army for religious reasons. The intent was to hold the pass with an advance force until the main army could arrive. The force at Thermopylae was far too small to meet the vast Persian army on equal terms, but possibly sufficient to defend the narrow pass. The Persians first tried bribery, then waited for four days in the hope that the Greeks would become disheartened or fall out with one another. When neither happened, they attacked.

Thermopylae, 480 BCE



After two days of repeated attacks in which the Persian army failed to make any real impression on the defenders, a Greek traitor informed them of a route around the defensive position. A force was sent to exploit this opportunity on the third day of the battle, while frontal attacks continued. Realizing that they were outflanked, the majority of the Greek force retreated, leaving a rearguard in the form of the Spartan, Thespian and Theban contingents. This force fought on to buy time for the remainder and was annihilated.

■ ARTEMISIUM, 480 BCE

Even after losing large numbers of ships to storms, the Persian fleet

greatly outnumbered its opponents when they met. After two days of skirmishing a major clash took place. Although hard-fought, it was indecisive, with heavy losses on both sides. The Persian fleet could better afford such losses than could the Greeks, but more importantly, word had arrived that the pass at Thermopylae had been forced. This made holding the straits at Artemisium meaningless, so the Greeks retreated.

■ ATHENS, 480 BCE

After forcing the pass at Thermopylae, the Persian army advanced on Athens, capturing and burning the city. The Athenian population and remaining military forces took refuge on the island of Salamis, protected by the Greek fleet.

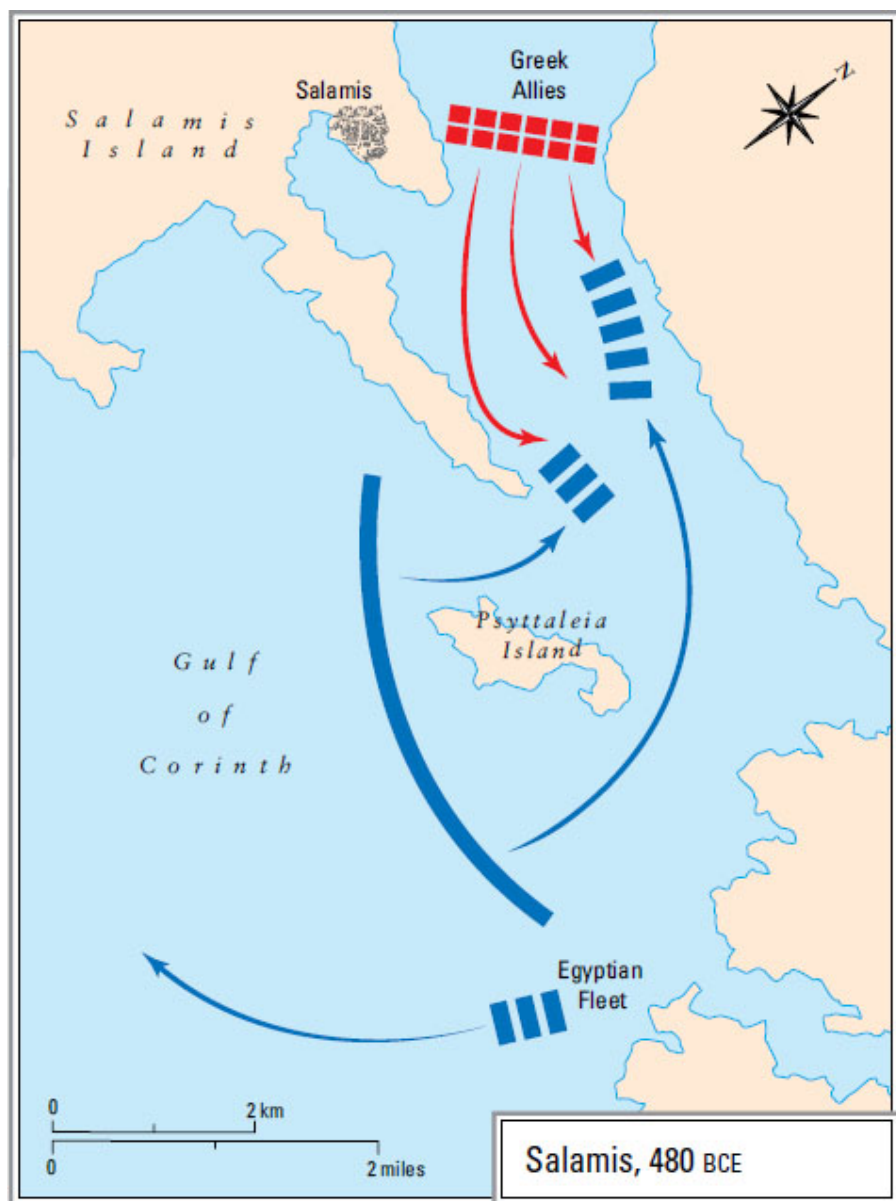
■ SALAMIS, 480 BCE

Having overrun Boeotia and Attica, further Persian progress in the invasion of Greece required sea power. Greek forces had heavily fortified the Isthmus of Corinth, making any advance in that direction a costly option unless the position could be flanked by sea. Meanwhile the Athenians had taken refuge on the island of Salamis and continued their defiance.

The Greek allied fleet was assembled at Salamis to oppose any further Persian advance. Its ships carried extra marines, mainly Athenian soldiers, but were outnumbered by their Persian opponents even though additional vessels had arrived from other Greek cities. Some of these fled in the face of the Persian fleet, leaving the Greeks confronting more than 700 Persian vessels with perhaps 300 of their own. The Persian fleet carried more marines aboard its vessels than was common Greek practice, and its ships were in better repair as they had been beached and overhauled in the early stages of the invasion. Their superior numbers were somewhat offset by the narrow waterway between Salamis and the mainland, which was just over 1.6km wide.

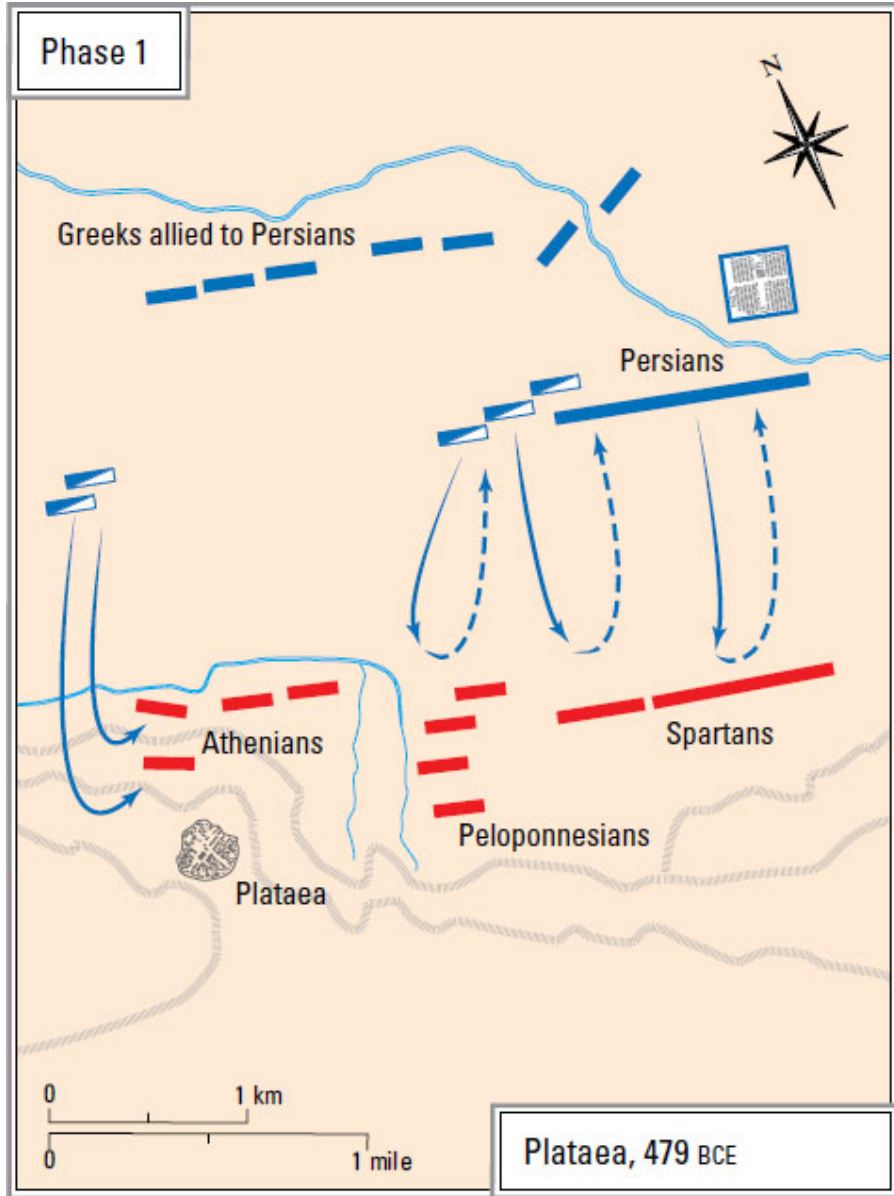
The Persians first tried to defeat the Greek fleet on land by building a causeway to the island that would allow an attack by the Persian army. This was prevented by archers who shot the workers as soon as the causeway came within range. A feint was made towards other Greek cities in the hope that elements of the allied fleet would rush to defend their homes. At first, this gambit appeared to have succeeded. Believing that some of the Greek forces intended to return to their homes, the Persian fleet positioned vessels to ambush them as they left the straits. However, this turned out to be a Greek ruse intended to draw out part of the Persian fleet and defeat it in detail. In due course Greek squadrons began sailing up the straits as if to depart homewards and the Persians advanced to attack them. The Greek ships fled, drawing their pursuers into a counter-ambush. As the pursued vessels

turned to fight, others emerged from hidden side channels to attack the Persians. Caught in narrow waters and disorganized from the pursuit, the Persian fleet was struck in the flanks and rear. Conditions in the straits favoured the heavier and more stable Greek vessels, which were comparatively unaffected by the swell. Conversely, the lighter Persian ships found their oar strokes badly disrupted. Whilst their opponents struggled to manoeuvre effectively, the Greeks found them easy targets for ramming attacks.



Part of the Persian fleet fled, allowing the Greeks to concentrate on

those who remained. With their admiral dead and their fleet in disarray, the Persians were overwhelmed. Many ships ran aground in their haste to escape or in the chaos of the battle, while others managed to flee out of the straits. The Persian force lost more than 200 ships as opposed to about 40 Greek vessels lost. Many of the crews of defeated Greek vessels were able to swim the short distance to Salamis and were thus available to fight aboard other ships, whilst losses among Persians who went into the water were much higher. Nevertheless, the Persian fleet remained a powerful force. The Greeks prepared for renewed battle, but the morale of the Persian fleet was broken. After a short time the Persian ships withdrew, leaving the army unsupported.

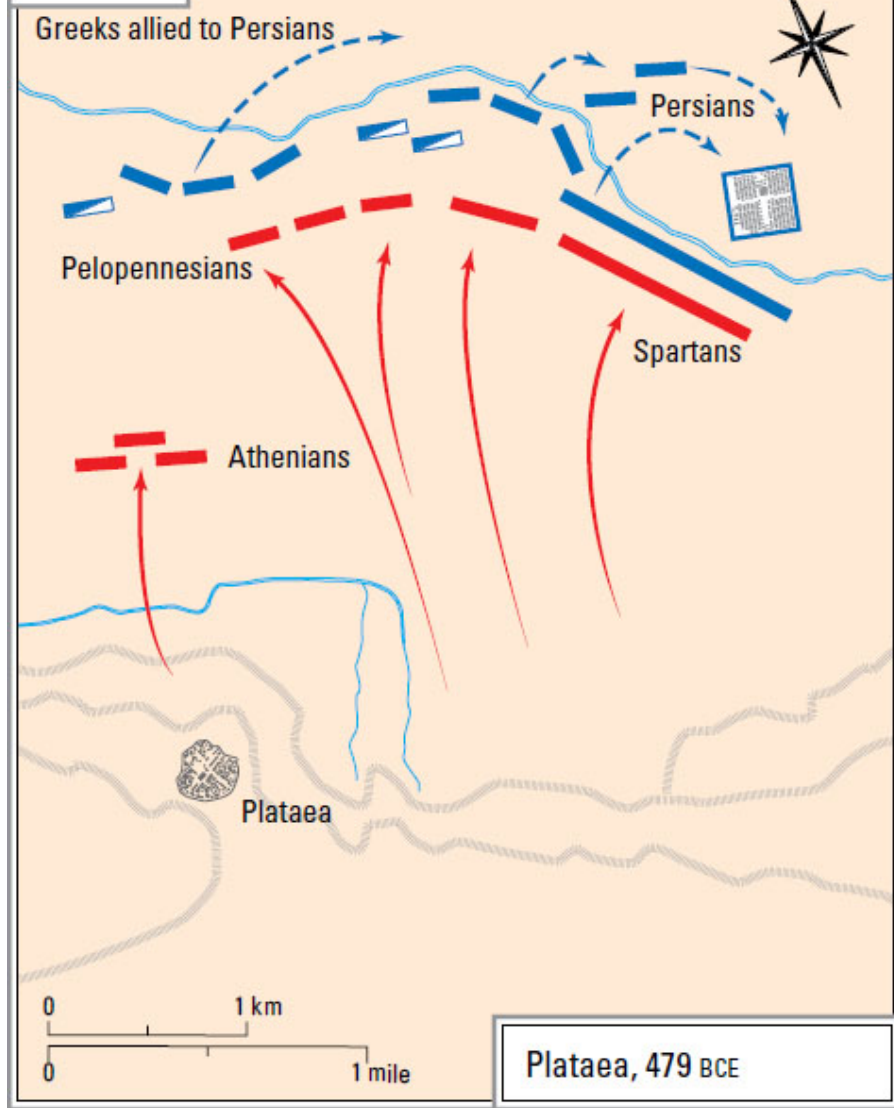


■ PLATAEA, 479 BCE

Defeated at Salamis, the Persian fleet withdrew, leaving the army to carry on the invasion of Greece without adequate support. Part of the army was also withdrawn, and with the Greek allies mustering large forces, the Persians were forced to retreat. Falling back into Boeotia, the Persians tried to exploit their main advantage over the hoplite-based forces of the Greeks. The slow-moving Greek infantry would be an easy target for Persian cavalry if they could be drawn into open country. The Persians thus built a fortified camp near Plataea and tried to induce the Greeks to attack them by raiding their supply lines.

Recognizing the danger they faced, the Greeks chose not to attack. The resulting standoff ended when the Greeks, perceiving the threat to their supply lines to be too great, began to withdraw. The Persian force seized this opportunity and launched an attack. What was intended to be a pursuit became a major battle. The Greek rearguard, composed of Spartans, came under attack by Persian cavalry, who pulled back once infantry came up to make their own attack. Meanwhile, the Athenian contingent became engaged with a phalanx of Thebans fighting on the Persian side. The heavily armed Greek hoplites gradually overcame the lighter-equipped Persian infantry. The Thebans put up determined resistance against their countrymen, but were eventually driven from the field. They retired homewards, away from the Persian army.

Phase 2



A significant Persian contingent was able to retreat towards the Hellespont, but many of the Persians took refuge in their camp, which was then surrounded by the Greeks. Once other elements of the allied army arrived, the camp was eventually stormed and the defenders slaughtered.

■ MYCALE, 479 BCE

Seeking to avoid a naval battle, the Persian fleet beached its ships and built a fortified camp. After the Ionian contingent of the Persian army defected, the Greeks stormed the camp and destroyed the Persian fleet.

■ CYPRUS, 479 BCE

With the Persian fleet defeated, an allied Greek force launched a raid in force against Cyprus. The Persian garrisons there were overcome and the island was looted, but did not become a Greek possession.

■ BYZANTIUM, 479 BCE

After looting Cyprus, the Greek fleet sailed to Byzantium and began a siege that was eventually successful. This gave them control of the straits between Asia and Europe, making a renewed Persian offensive unlikely.

■ EION, 475 BCE

Having formed the Delian League under Athenian leadership, the Greeks launched a campaign against Eion with the intent of removing the Persian garrison there. After a lengthy siege, the city was captured and became an Athenian possession.

■ SKYROS, 475 BCE

Skyros was not a Persian stronghold, but had become a haven for pirates. The Delian League conquered the island and set up an Athenian colony to secure their control of the surrounding seas.

■ EURYMEDON RIVER, 466 BCE

Recovering from earlier defeats, the Persian Empire began to build a large fleet with the obvious intention of renewing hostilities with the city-states of Greece. The Greeks had been harassing Persian territory for some years, and had captured several important coastal cities. It is likely that the initial Persian goal was to retake these cities before proceeding with an invasion of the islands and, eventually, mainland Greece. As the Persian fleet and its associated army assembled at Aspendos on the River Eurymedon, the Delian League launched a pre-emptive strike. First sailing to Phaselis, the Greeks harassed the city until its population agreed to join the League and contribute to the expedition. From there, the Greeks launched their attack.

The Persian fleet was at anchor at the mouth of the River Eurymedon, awaiting reinforcements before commencing operations. Upon sighting the approaching Greeks, the Persians first retreated into the river before accepting battle. Although outnumbered, the Greek fleet was quickly victorious. Most of the Persian fleet was able to escape by running aground. The crews took shelter in the Persian army nearby. The Greeks then landed troops and engaged the Persian force. As in previous engagements, the heavy equipment and long spears of the Greek hoplites proved superior to the lighter gear of the Persian infantry, and the Persian line was broken. Many Persians fled into their camp, but this was overrun soon afterwards. The Greeks were able to capture or destroy large numbers of beached Persian warships after the land battle, and according to some sources, went on

to intercept and defeat the Persian reinforcements coming up the coast. Whether or not this is the case, the Greek victory at the Eurymedon prevented any major new Persian offensives for some time.

■ THASOS, 465 BCE

After the conquest of Eion, Athens founded the colony of Amphipolis, expanding its power base. Feeling that this colony threatened its interests, Thasos rebelled against the Delian League. After a three-year siege, Thasos was subdued and reincorporated into the League.

■ PAMPRENIS, 460–459 BCE

Rebelling against Persian rule, Egypt asked for aid from the Delian League. A joint Delian-Egyptian force engaged the Persian army near Pamprenis. After a hard-fought battle, the heavier-equipped Greeks broke the Persian line.

■ MEMPHIS, 460–454 BCE

Defeated in the field, elements of the Persian army took refuge in the citadel of Memphis where they were besieged by Athenian and Egyptian forces. The siege was finally raised by the arrival of another Persian army.

■ PROSOPTIS, 454 BCE

After being driven from Memphis, the Athenians retired to a fortified camp on the island of Prosopitis at the mouth of the Nile, where they were besieged for over a year. The Persians dug canals to drain the river, lowering its level sufficiently to gain access to the island. They then launched an attack that defeated the Athenian force. Accounts of the battle differ, but it is likely that the Athenians were virtually annihilated.

■ MENDESIUM, 454 BCE

Attempting to relieve Prosopitis, a Greek fleet entered the mouth of the Nile and was ambushed from the landward and seaward flanks. Only a small portion of the fleet was able to return to the open sea.

■ SALAMIS, 450 BCE

After a failed siege of Kition in Cyprus, the Athenian fleet sailed to Salamis where they were engaged by a Persian fleet. Defeating the Persians at sea, the Athenians landed troops at Salamis to complete the victory on land.

Peloponnesian War & Greek Wars 458–403 BCE

Athens vs Sparta

■ AEGINA, 458–457 BCE

Although Aegina lay very close to Athens, its people were allied with Sparta and Sparta's Peloponnesian allies. Athenians defeated the powerful Aeginetian fleet before landing to begin a siege. Aegina fell a year and a half later.

■ TANAGRA–OENPHYTA, 457 BCE

Drawn into conflicts in Boeotia by their allies, a Spartan army became cut off by an Athenian force positioned to block its line of retreat. After a standoff, the Athenians attacked near Tanagra. Despite heavy casualties on both sides, the Spartans were able to force a passage and return home. The Athenian force then advanced into Boeotia, capturing Locrida, Phocis and Tanagra. This success also paved the way for final victory at Aegina.

■ CORONEA, 447 BCE

An Athenian army advanced into Boeotia to restore control over regions that had been lost to rebellion. Although initially successful, the Athenians were defeated by a Boeotian force at Coronea and forced out of Boeotia.

■ SYBOTA, 433 BCE

Seeking independence, the Corinthian colony of Corcyra allied itself with Athens, which was hostile to Corinth's ally, Sparta. A Corinthian fleet sent to restore control was opposed by the powerful Corcyran fleet, with additional ships from Athens. The battle was characterized by boarding actions rather than ramming attacks. Despite the defeat of one wing of its fleet, Corinth emerged victorious. Reinforcements from Athens arrived in time to prevent a landing, and Corcyran independence was preserved.



■ POTIDAEA, 432 BCE

The Delian League was founded as an alliance against Persia under Athenian leadership, but eventually grew into more of an Athenian Empire than an alliance of equals. Among the League members was the city of Potidaea, a Corinthian colony. Corinth was allied to Sparta and therefore hostile to Athens.

Having successfully supported Corcyra's bid for independence from Corinth, Athens attempted to cement its influence over Potidaea. Among the Athenian demands were the expulsion of Corinthian officials and the provision of hostages to Athens. These demands were

underscored by an Athenian fleet sent to Potidaea.

With assurances of assistance from Sparta, Potidaea allied itself with King Perdiccas II of Macedon, who had been encouraging anti-Athenian revolts for some time. Corinthian troops also arrived in Potidaea, and together these forces attempted to prevent the Athenians, who had also been reinforced, from advancing on the city.

The Macedonian contingent did not engage, but the Corinthians put up stiff resistance and an additional force of Potidaeans also attacked the Athenian army. However, the Athenians were ultimately victorious and were able to continue towards the city. There they implemented a naval blockade and began siege operations.

Further reinforcements joined the Athenians during the siege, which nevertheless went on until 429 BCE. Potidaea was finally subdued and its population sent into exile. Athenian colonists were sent to establish a loyal population in the city. Despite its eventual success, the siege was extremely expensive and caused significant unrest in Athens. More importantly, tensions with Sparta came to a head during the period of the siege, resulting in the declaration of what would come to be known as the Peloponnesian War.

■ CHALCIS, 429 BCE

An Athenian army marched to Spartolos to compel the city's surrender, but was met by a force from Chalcidice, Olynthus and Spartolos. The initial clash was inconclusive, but reinforcements from Olynthus helped defeat the Athenians in a second battle.

■ RHIMUM, 429 BCE

A Peloponnesian fleet, including many transports filled with troops for a land campaign, was attacked by Athenian triremes while crossing the Gulf of Patras. In order to protect the transport vessels from ramming attacks, the Peloponnesian force formed a circular defensive formation with the ships' bows pointing outwards. The Athenians sailed around the formation in a tightening circle, forcing the Peloponnesian vessels closely together. Once their opponents were too close to be able to manoeuvre effectively the Athenians attacked.

■ PLATAEA, 429–427 BCE

Spartan attempts to breach the high walls of Plataea resulted in a frenzy of engineering and counter-engineering works and a siege that dragged on for months. Part of the Plataean garrison escaped in the winter of 429–428 BCE, with the remainder finally starved into submission in 427 BCE.

■ NAUPACTUS, 429 BCE

The Peloponnesian fleet made a feint at the Athenian naval base at Naupactus, drawing Athens' fleet into a vulnerable position. A sudden attack routed the Athenians, with several ships driven ashore. The

remaining Athenian ships were pursued into the harbour at Naupactus. There, reinforcements awaited and a vigorous counterattack routed the Peloponnesian fleet. The Athenians retook the previously lost vessels, and naval dominance in the region was assured by the arrival of additional ships.

■ MYTILENE, 427 BCE

With Athens embroiled in the Peloponnesian War, the city of Mytilene led most of the cities of Lesbos in open revolt, attacking an Athenian force sent to restore the situation. Although initially defeated, the Athenians received reinforcements and implemented a close blockade of Mytilene. The Peloponnesian League agreed to assist Mytilene, but help failed to materialize in time to make any difference. Mytilene was starved into submission and surrendered after the population rebelled against their own leaders.

■ TANAGRA, 426 BCE

After pillaging Melos in the hope of forcing the island to join the Delian League, an Athenian fleet landed troops close to Tanagra where they encountered a joint Tanagran–Theban force. The Athenians were victorious but withdrew after the battle.

■ OLPÆ, 426 BCE

The occupation of Olpæ by a force from Ambracia caused its Acarnanian owners to request Athenian assistance. This was countered by a Spartan force which joined the Ambracians. The Spartan-led troops succeeded in enveloping the Athenian flank, but were driven off by the attack of a small ambush force previously concealed on that flank. After a day of hard fighting the Athenians emerged victorious.

■ IDOMENE, 426 BCE

Having defeated a Spartan–Ambracian force, the Athenian army was well positioned to ambush Ambracian reinforcements who were marching to join their countrymen, unaware of the presence of hostile forces in the area.

■ PYLOS, 425 BCE

Attempting to remove a small Athenian garrison established at Pylos, Spartan forces made several fruitless assaults before beginning siege preparations. They were then attacked by an Athenian fleet, destroying their ships and trapping a force of hoplites on the island of Sphacteria.

■ SPHACTERIA, 425 BCE

After peace negotiations failed, the Athenians attacked a force of Spartan hoplites who were cut off on Sphacteria. The Athenians drove their enemies into a fortified position where they held out until flanked and forced to surrender.

■ INVASION OF THRACE, 424 BCE

The Spartan general Brasidas marched into Thrace and began operating against Athenian allies there. He convinced or compelled several cities to rebel against Athens, forcing the Athenians to begin negotiations for a truce.

■ MEGARA, 424 BCE

As Peloponnesian pressure on Athens eased, the Athenians had gone over to the offensive, operating against Megara from 431 BCE onwards. The Megaran port of Minoa was captured in 427 BCE, and Megara came under siege by Athenian forces. A plot to open the gates to the Athenians was discovered, derailing a plan to storm the city. Instead the Athenians attacked a Peloponnesian army stationed nearby, inflicting a minor and inconclusive defeat.

■ DELIUM, 424 BCE

The Boeotian army attacked Athenian troops at Delium, while the Athenian commander was still in the middle of an oration. The Athenian right encircled the Boeotian left and defeated it, though Athenian troops ended up fighting one another in the confusion and were then set upon by cavalry. Meanwhile, the Theban phalanx, drawn up unusually deep on the Boeotian right, broke its opponents. The Athenians were driven back to their fort at Delium where they became besieged for a time.

■ AMPHIPOLIS, 422 BCE

An Athenian army arrived at Amphipolis to take back the city, which had surrendered two years earlier. The Spartan garrison retired into the city, then suddenly attacked and routed the unprepared Athenians.

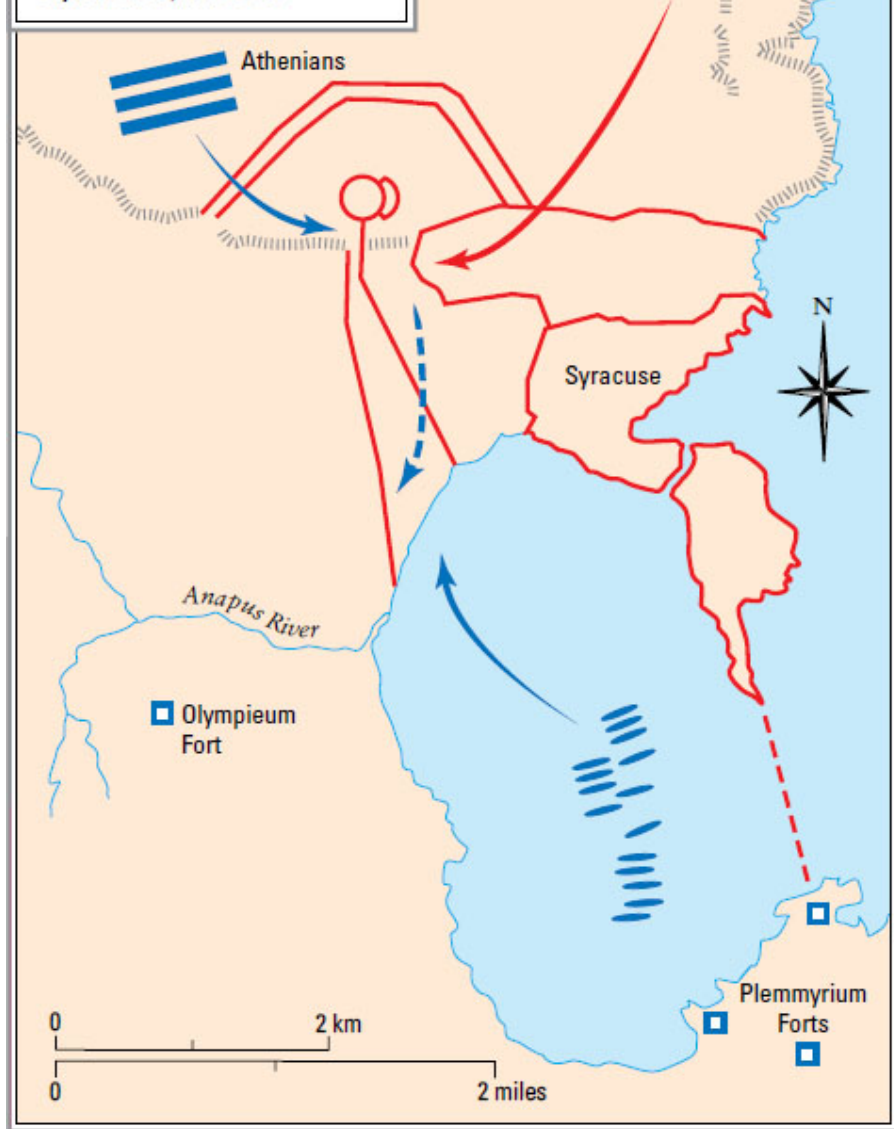
■ MANTINEA, 418 BCE

Internal politics caused the Spartans to seek a battle with the forces of Argos and Athens by marching on Mantinea. The Argives initially retired rather than fight, but then advanced to attack the Spartans before the latter's allies could arrive. As was typical in hoplite warfare, the right flank of each army lapped around the enemy left, and the Mantineans were able to exploit the advantage this gave them. However, their allies from Athens and Argos were defeated, forcing a retreat.

■ SYRACUSE, 415–413 BCE

In the hope of weakening Sparta and its Peloponnesian allies, and gaining sufficient strength to win the ongoing war against them, Athens decided to embark upon an ambitious expedition against Sicily. The main city on the island was the Corinthian colony of Syracuse, whose subjugation would considerably further Athenian aims.

Syracuse, 415 BCE



The fleet that set out for Sicily represented what was at the time the largest military expedition in history. The journey was long and slow, especially since navigation on the open sea was not possible. As the fleet coast-hopped its way towards Sicily, there was plenty of time for the Syracusans to begin defensive preparations.

The fleet landed at the small city of Catana to the north of Syracuse, without opposition as the city lacked sufficient resources to resist such a large force. From there, the Athenians set up a camp and began operations on the island, drawing out an army from Syracuse to attack them.

As this force marched towards the Athenian camp, the Athenians boarded their ships and sailed to Syracuse itself, arriving well before the Syracusans could return. The Athenians established themselves ashore and defeated the returning Syracusan army, but then entered winter quarters in Catana and Naxos.

The Syracusans made preparations for siege during the winter, and in the spring of 414 BCE the conflict began in earnest. Athenian forces eliminated Syracusan outposts, destroyed farmlands and built fortifications around the city. Syracusan sallies to try to disrupt the siegeworks were beaten off, and the Athenians began to surround the city with a wall.

If the siege lines were completed, the city would be entirely cut off from outside assistance and could be starved into submission. The Syracusans attempted to prevent this by building one of their own to intercept it. This construction was stormed and destroyed, so the Syracusans began another one which suffered the same fate.

A small force from Sparta then arrived on Sicily and began operating against the Athenians, while Syracusan forces made sorties from their city. The latter usually failed due to inexperience among the Syracusan troops, but the siege works were disrupted. Eventually, Spartan leadership enabled the Syracusans, making effective use of their cavalry, to defeat an Athenian force and build a third wall blocking the Athenian encirclement.

The arrival of Corinthian ships enabled the Syracusans and their allies to mount a credible challenge to Athenian sea power, while both sides received additional troops. A Spartan offensive against Athenian territory in Greece distracted attention, while efforts to recruit more troops on Sicily itself bore fruit. The Syracusans and their allies grew in strength relative to their opponents, and began attacking more boldly both on land and at sea.

Although unable to defeat the Athenian fleet, the Syracusans managed to force it into the harbour where it became trapped. This effectively placed the Athenians under siege, as their supplies had to come in by sea. Some of the forts surrounding the city were also captured, and supply depots established in Italy were raided by Syracusan and allied naval forces which could now operate freely. Reinforcements arrived to assist the Athenians, enabling an offensive that succeeded in destroying part of the Syracusans' defensive works. The operation dissolved into chaos soon after, and was soundly defeated. The arrival of yet more enemy reinforcements prompted the Athenians to begin preparing for a retreat, though Syracusan attacks on the fleet and their blockade of the harbour made this a difficult prospect.

The Athenian breakout attempt resulted in a huge close-quarters

naval battle, which the Athenians eventually lost. Unable to escape by sea, they tried to break out on land and retire to another part of Sicily, but were harassed en route and finally forced to surrender.

■ MELOS, 415 BCE

Athens demanded that the Spartan colony of Melos join the Athenian side. Melos preferred to remain neutral and declined, so Athens conquered the city, executing all males and enslaving the women and children.

■ ERETRIA, 411 BCE

Athens sent a naval squadron to Eretria, whose loyalty was suspect. While the squadron was resupplying in harbour it was attacked by a Spartan fleet and defeated. Eretria then joined the Spartan side.

■ CYNOSSEMA, 411 BCE

The defeat of the Sicilian Expedition greatly diminished Athenian prestige and encouraged other cities to consider switching sides. Spartan diplomacy was successful in provoking several revolts, and the Athenian fleet was forced to act as a response force, putting down rebellions among the coastal cities. This enabled the Spartan fleet to operate more freely.

In response to Spartan naval forces operating in the Hellespont, Athens sent a fleet to remove the threat. This fleet was attacked as it rounded the point of Cynossema, becoming scattered. The divisions of the fleet were driven apart, with the central group largely driven aground. As the battle became increasingly disorganized, the Athenian right flank rallied and went on to the offensive, breaking the Spartan left flank force and then attacking the central group. The surviving Spartan vessels were able to break off and retire to Abydos.

■ SYME, 411 BCE

Attempting to prevent the junction of Spartan fleets, an Athenian force intercepted one contingent off the island of Syme. In a disorganized action fought during a storm, the Athenians were initially successful but were then defeated by the arrival of additional Spartan ships.

■ CYZICUS, 410 BCE

Using a small force as bait, the Athenians drew the Spartan fleet out of port, then cut off its retreat with larger groups of ships. The entire Spartan fleet was captured or destroyed.

■ ABYDOS, 410 BCE

After a closely contested battle between equal forces, the Spartan fleet was put to flight by Athenian reinforcements. Many ships were lost during the subsequent pursuit, until the Spartans found refuge in their base at Abydos.

■ NOTIUM, 406 BCE

Attempting to repeat the strategy used at Cyzicus by drawing the

Spartan fleet out of port in Ephesus, the Athenians sent a small force to tempt the Spartans into an ambush. The decoy force was caught and savaged by the Spartans, who then pursued the survivors towards their base at Notium. The remainder of the Athenian fleet was caught unprepared and suffered heavy losses from a vigorous Spartan attack.

■ SELINUS, 409 BCE

The Sicilian city of Segesta requested Carthaginian assistance against aggression from Selinus, prompting a major expedition. The Carthaginians made extensive use of rams and siege towers, enabling them to take the city by storm after a 10-day siege.

■ BYZANTIUM, 408 BCE

Athenian forces besieging Byzantium gained entry when a demoralized segment of the population agreed to desert their posts at an appointed time. During the ensuing fighting, the Athenians offered generous surrender terms, which were eventually accepted.

■ MYTILENE, 406 BCE

A badly outnumbered Athenian fleet was defeated by Spartan forces just outside the harbour at Mytilene, where it was forced to accept siege. This prompted the dispatch of another fleet from Athens.

■ ARGINUSAE, 406 BCE

Obtaining contributions from several allies, the Spartans managed to assemble a powerful fleet, which quickly captured Methymna. Using the city as a base enabled the Spartan fleet to threaten the rest of the island of Lesbos, which in turn would allow a move against the Hellespont.

To counter this threat, the Athenians had only a relatively small fleet. With no alternative but to move against the Spartans, this force moved close to Lesbos where it was attacked and quickly defeated. Finding refuge in Mytilene, the fleet became besieged, though a vessel did manage to escape to Athens with a request for aid.

Desperate measures allowed the Athenians to put together another fleet, which was jointly commanded by eight generals. Gathering allied vessels along the way, the fleet advanced to Lesbos. To offset the inexperience of the Athenian crews, their vessels operated as eight small independent combat groups and deployed in a double line to counter standard ramming tactics.

The numerically superior Athenian fleet was able to outflank its opponents, and after a period of intense fighting the Spartan right flank broke. The Athenians turned their full force on the remaining Spartan ships, which were forced to retreat with heavy losses. Leaving a small force to rescue survivors from sunken Athenian ships, the remainder of the fleet pushed on to relieve the fleet besieged in Mytilene. A storm drove the Athenians into port before either of these

objectives could be achieved. Despite their victory the eight generals were recalled to Athens. The six who did return were condemned to death for their failure to complete the mission or rescue the survivors.

■ AEGOSPOTAMI, 405 BCE

After the losses at Arginusae, Sparta was able to build a large number of replacement vessels with the assistance of Persian funds. This new fleet operated in the Aegean, capturing a number of Athenian ports. The ultimate goal was control of the Hellespont, through which supplies of grain essential to Athens passed.

By raiding close to Athens, the Spartan fleet drew the main Athenian fleet away from its base at Samos. The Spartans then slipped past the Athenian fleet and entered the Hellespont, capturing the town of Lampsacus and threatening the Athenian grain and trade routes.

The Athenian fleet took station outside Lampsacus, but could not tempt the Spartans to come out and fight. A base was established on a nearby beach. This was not very secure and made supplying the fleet troublesome, but it did allow a close watch to be kept on the Spartans. All day the Athenian fleet waited outside the harbour, returning to its temporary base each evening.

Accounts of the battle that ensued vary. In one version, the Spartans declined to come out and fight, waiting until the Athenians had retired for the night. They then attacked the beached fleet and overran it. The other version is a repeat of the battle of Notium; a portion of the Athenian fleet attempted to draw out the Spartans and was also successful. After scattering the decoy force, the Spartans then fell on the main fleet, which was unprepared, and inflicted a crushing defeat.

Whichever version is correct, the Athenian fleet was all but annihilated. The Spartans then advanced westward, capturing cities as they went, and cut off grain supplies to Athens. This forced an Athenian surrender which brought to an end the Peloponnesian War.

■ PHYLAE, 405 BCE

After the end of the Peloponnesian War, a group of Athenian exiles entered Attica and tried to overthrow the Spartan-imposed government of Athens. A Spartan-led force sent against them was ambushed and decisively defeated.

■ MUNICHIYA, 403 BCE

Victorious at Phylae, Athenian exiles marched to Piraeus and captured the hill of Munichiya. The exiles charged down the hill and scattered the force assembled against them, killing some of the Spartan-imposed Athenian leaders.

■ PIRAEUS, 403 BCE

A Spartan army was sent to remove Athenian exiles who had occupied Piraeus. After initial successes against the Spartans' light troops and

cavalry the exiles were defeated. Rather than crush the exiles, the Spartan commander then negotiated a settlement that ended the exiles' campaign.

The Anabasis 401–6 BCE

■ MARCH OF THE 10,000, 401–400 BCE

The Persian prince Cyrus the Younger recruited large numbers of Greek mercenaries to fight against his brother, who had inherited the Persian throne. At the battle of Cunaxa in 401 BCE, Cyrus was killed, leaving the mercenaries without a patron. Their services were refused by other Persian leaders, and they were unwilling to surrender to the local satrap.

The mercenaries were mostly hoplites, recruited from various regions of Greece. Their overall commander at the battle of Cunaxa was a Spartan named Clearchus, but along with many of the other Greek leaders he was betrayed by the local satrap and executed. With no alternatives remaining, replacement commanders were selected and the force set out to march home. The tale of the march is related by Xenophon, who became leader of the Ten Thousand, in the *Anabasis*.

The troops of the Ten Thousand, as they became known, were sufficiently disciplined to be able to remain a coherent fighting force despite the difficulties they faced. This permitted them to negotiate for supplies, with the threat of force to back up their requests. Where diplomacy failed, the Ten Thousand were able to forage or raid for what they needed.

Despite harassment and sometimes sterner resistance from local leaders or tribal peoples whose territory they passed through, the Ten Thousand were finally able to cross Mesopotamia and reach the shores of the Black Sea. Although this area contained many Greek cities, the march was not over.

Crossing into Thrace, the Ten Thousand took service there, fighting for a general who became King Seuthes II of Thrace. They then marched onward into Greece itself, where they were recruited into the Spartan forces. Under the command of General Thibron, the Ten Thousand fought against the Persians and took part in a siege of Larissa.

Wars of the Greek City-States 395–356 BCE

■ HALIARTUS, 395 BCE

The Spartans sent two armies against the Boeotians, one from the Peloponnese under King Pausanias, the other from Phocis under Lysander. Lysander won over Orchomenus in Boeotia and advanced faster than planned. Unknown to him, the Athenians allied with the Boeotians and deployed against Pausanias. Freed to act, the Boeotians attacked Lysander unexpectedly at Haliartus in Boeotia, killing him and dispersing his army. Pausanias had to retreat.

■ CORONEA, 394 BCE

Invading Boeotia, Sparta's King Agesilaus and some 15,000 Spartans, allies and mercenaries defeated the Boeotians and their allies near Coronea. However, the contingent from Thebes in Boeotia overcame its opponents and reached Agesilaus' baggage train. The king rallied Spartan infantry and attacked the Thebans head-on, seeking to block their escape. After hard fighting the Thebans broke through to their allies' defensive position. Wounded in battle, Agesilaus withdrew.

■ CNIDUS, 394 BCE

Years of naval stalemate between Sparta and Persia ended when the Spartan admiral Peisander engaged the fleet of the Persian satrap Pharnabazus and his admiral, Conon of Athens, near Cnidus in Asia Minor. Initially successful, Peisander's 85 triremes were defeated by over 90 Greek ships under Conon, supported by Pharnabazus and a Phoenician fleet. Peisander lost 50 triremes and his life, Sparta its dominance of the Aegean.

■ NEMEA, 394 BCE

A Spartan and allied army invaded Corinthian territory, forestalling an invasion of Laconia by a coalition force of over 24,000 Corinthian, Athenian, Argive and Boeotian hoplites. Near the Nemea river the coalition attacked, routing most Spartan-allied units. However, 6000 Spartans routed their Athenian opponents, turned and defeated in sequence several major coalition units as each returned in disorder from pursuit. The coalition never attempted to invade Laconia thereafter.

■ RAVAGING THE CORINTHIA, 394 BCE

Following Nemea and Coronea, the Spartans attacked Corinth's countryside, using raids and invasions. As a result, a pro-peace faction formed in Corinth, producing, ironically, civil strife and efforts to betray its defences.

■ LECHAEUM, 390 BCE

Trained and led by the Athenian Iphicrates, mercenary peltasts using javelins and pelta shields harassed to destruction a regiment of Spartan hoplites caught in the open west of Lechaeum, Corinth's port, killing 250.

■ THEBAN REVOLT, 379 BCE

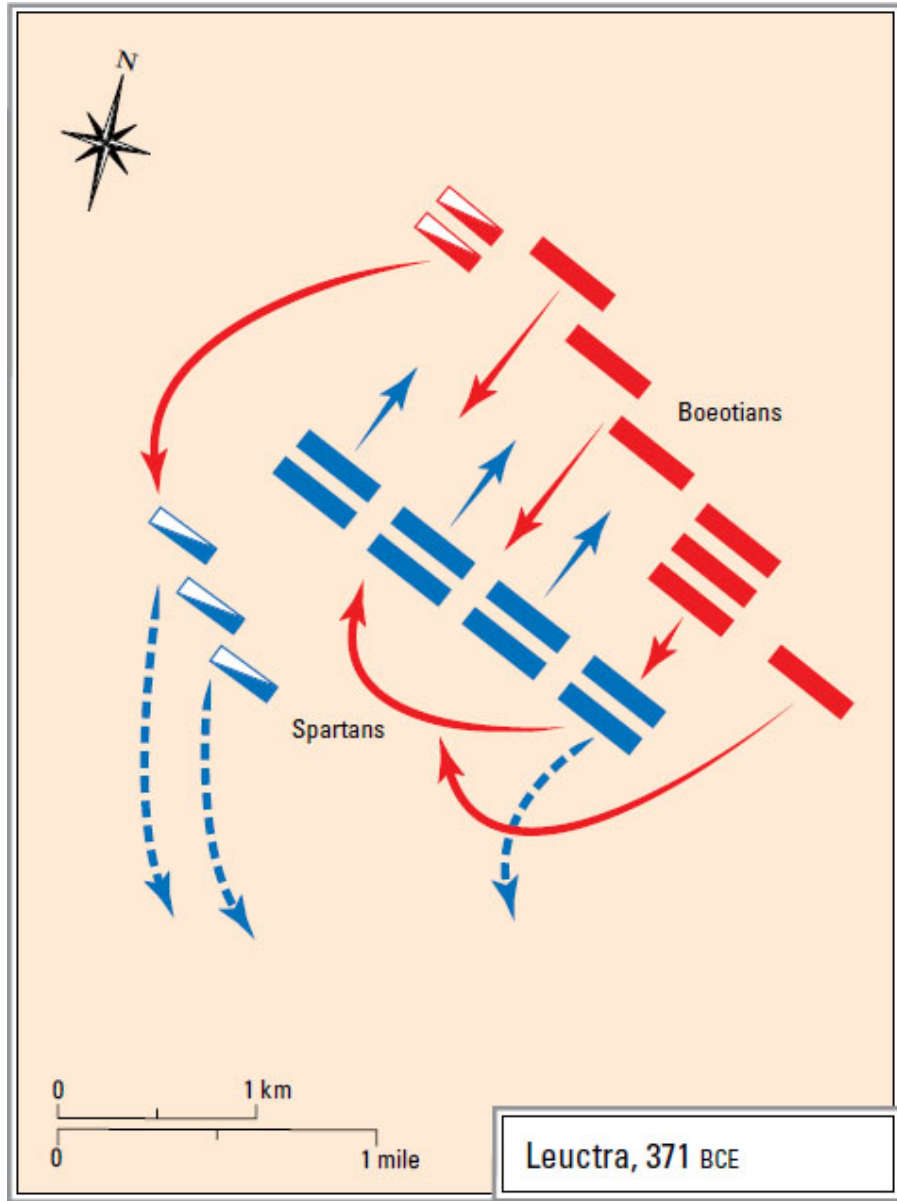
Democratic conspirators rose against the pro-Spartan faction ruling Thebes, killing its leaders. Aided by Athenian forces, they then assaulted the Cadmea, the city's citadel. The small Spartan garrison evacuated on terms.

■ TEGYRA, 375 BCE

His retreat blocked by 1000 Spartans, Pelopidas attacked with 300 hoplites of the Theban Sacred Band and 200 Boeotian cavalry, killing the Spartan commanders, forcing the enemy formation to divide, and routing it.

■ LEUCTRA, 371 BCE

After isolating the Boeotians diplomatically, the Spartans sent against them King Cleombrotus, then in Phocis with an army of 10,000 infantry and 1000 cavalry. The Boeotians tried to block his invasion, but he successfully crossed Mount Helicon and bypassed their defences, encamping at Leuctra, south of Thespieae. The Boeotians deployed 6000 infantry and cavalry against him. Their leaders were divided about seeking battle, but finally Epaminondas and others favouring action prevailed. Cleombrotus also felt he had to fight, for political reasons.



Cleombrotus formed his hoplites 12 deep, the Spartans on the right, the allies on the left, and deployed his cavalry in front of his formation. At Tegyra the Boeotian cavalry probably harassed the Spartan infantry there and stopped them from encircling the outnumbered Boeotian hoplites, helping to cause the Spartan defeat. Cleombrotus probably aimed to prevent another such effort. However, the Spartans had neglected their cavalry arm, while the Boeotian cavalry was battle-hardened. Its charge routed the Spartan cavalry, which burst in through its own infantry, catching it in disorder as it sought to extend its formation to the right.

This Spartan move had been meant to outflank and encircle the infantry of Thebes, the leading city in Boeotia. Deployed on the left wing and formed 50 deep, they were advancing against the Spartan unit in which King Cleombrotus stood, intending 'to crush the head of the serpent'. The rest of the Boeotians were deployed on the right wing, but had been ordered to stand fast. The Spartan allies also failed to advance. The battle would be decided between the Spartans and Thebans.

Seeing the king's unit disordered by the process of extension, Pelopidas, commander of the picked hoplite unit called the Sacred Band, led it in a charge ahead of the other Thebans. Although attacked unexpectedly, the Spartans held off the Sacred Band, retrieving their mortally wounded king from the fight. But then the massed Thebans arrived and attacked, probably on the Spartans' flank. The king's unit was crushed. Disordered, attacked by cavalry and facing the oncoming mass, the other Spartan units gave way as well. The survivors fell back onto the hill where they were encamped and stood on the defensive. Almost 1000 Spartans perished, including over 400 full citizens. Theban losses were minor in comparison.

Once word of the defeat reached Sparta, a relief army under Prince Archidamus was levied and sent north. Before it reached the scene, however, Jason of Pherae in Thessaly had arrived with his army, ostensibly to aid the Boeotians. He persuaded them to let the Spartans withdraw under truce, and persuaded the Spartans there to agree. Prevented by the sworn truce from attempting any further operations, Archidamus dismissed his army.

The Boeotian battleplan at Leuctra, Epaminondas' conception, combined a rapid attack in oblique order weighted on the left, concentration on the enemy command structure and use of a massed infantry attack column in coordination with cavalry. No one element was truly new in Greek warfare, but their use together in so bold an action was remarkable. Leuctra ended the era of Spartan victories in major land battles, unbroken for 17 decades. Already weakened by population decline, loss of legitimacy and the increasing military skill of its foes, Sparta's power in Greece had been sustained chiefly by her reputation. This was dispelled by Leuctra.

■ CYNOSCEPHALAE, 364 BCE

In a meeting engagement, Pelopidas' Thessalian cavalry routed Alexander of Pherae's horsemen. Pelopidas then drove Alexander's infantry off Cynoscephalae ridge with hoplite frontal attacks and cavalry flank attacks. He died attacking Alexander's guards.

■ MANTINEA, 362 BCE

Seeking decisive battle, Epaminondas went against the Arcadian, Spartan and Athenian army deployed south of Mantinea between

Mounts Mytika and Kapnistra. He led his army across the enemy front and made as if to encamp, only to mass his leading units and charge suddenly. His horsemen routed the enemy's right flank cavalry, and his Boeotian hoplites crushed their Spartan opponents. However, Epaminondas was slain, throwing all into confusion.

Athenian Social War 357–355 BCE

■ CHIOS, 357 BCE

During the Social War, Athenian troops under Chares attacked Chios but were driven off by the rebel coalition, while Chabrias perished in a simultaneous attempt to force the harbour with 60 Athenian ships.

■ LEMNOS, 356 BCE

During the Social War, the rebellious cities of Chios, Rhodes and Byzantium, together with their allies, manned 100 ships. This fleet ravaged the islands of Lemnos and Imbros, both Athenian possessions.

■ IMBROS, 356 BCE

During the Social War, the rebellious cities of Chios, Rhodes and Byzantium, together with their allies, manned 100 ships. This fleet ravaged the islands of Imbros and Lemnos, both Athenian possessions.

■ SAMOS, 356 BCE

After Lemnos and Imbros, the 100 ships from Chios, Rhodes, and Byzantium ravaged the island of Samos, an Athenian possession, and besieged its city, only to withdraw when Athens moved against Byzantium.

■ EMBATA, 356 BCE

During the Social War, two 60-ship Athenian fleets sought to intercept 100 rebel ships at Embata near Erythrae. Storms caused one Athenian fleet to abort action, and sunk several ships of the other.

Macedonian Wars 355–303 BCE

■ VICTORY OVER THESSALY, 355–353 BCE

Twice defeated by Onomarchus, the Phocian Philip II of Macedonia retreated, re-armed and re-invaded Thessaly in 353 BCE. In a pitched battle near the Pagasean Gulf, Philip and his cavalry killed Onomarchus and therefore become masters of Thessaly.

■ BATTLE OF THE CROCUS FIELD, 353 BCE

As Onomarchus moved north to join forces with his allies at Pherae, Philip II and the Macedonian cavalry won a large-scale battle at this uncertain location near the Thessalian coast. 6000 Phocians and Onomarchus perished.

■ THERMOPYLAE, 352 BCE

This celebrated strategic pass from Thessaly to Greece was held by an Athenian expeditionary force to protect the Phocians from Philip II after the Crocus Field. The Athenians' defences discouraged Philip from trying to move further southward.

■ VOLO, 352 BCE

This modern Greek town on the Thessalian coast was near the plain where the full Phocian army fought and lost the huge battle of the Crocus Field. That Macedonian victory gave Philip II Thessaly and ruined Phocis.

■ THRACE AND CHALCIDICE, 352–346 BCE

Athenian northern interests and support of Phocis prompted Philip to move against their allies in these regions. Philip picked off the Thracian tribes, culminating in his siege of a fort called Heraeon Teichos. Despite Demosthenes' urging, the Athenians were too preoccupied by a revolt Philip staged on Euboea to save their last ally, Olynthus, which Philip destroyed in 348 BCE. The 346 Peace of Philocrates, which spared some Athenian possessions, recognized Philip's dominance in the north.

■ BYZANTIUM, 340 BCE

Demosthenes' oratory undid Philip's efforts to sever Athens' Ukrainian grain route by making an alliance with the city on the Bosphorus. Byzantium's alliance with Athens against Philip was a major blow to his northern objectives.

■ CHAERONEA, 338 BCE

Philip's sudden march southward prompted a rare alliance between Athens and Thebes, which met Philip north of Thebes in battle on 7 August. Alexander commanded the cavalry in a devastating rout that gave Greece to Philip.

■ THEBES, 335 BCE

After Philip II's assassination and a false report of Alexander's death, Thebes rose in revolt against a Macedonian garrison. Following a lightning march, Alexander destroyed the ancient city utterly as an example to the Greeks.

■ GRANICUS RIVER, 334 BCE

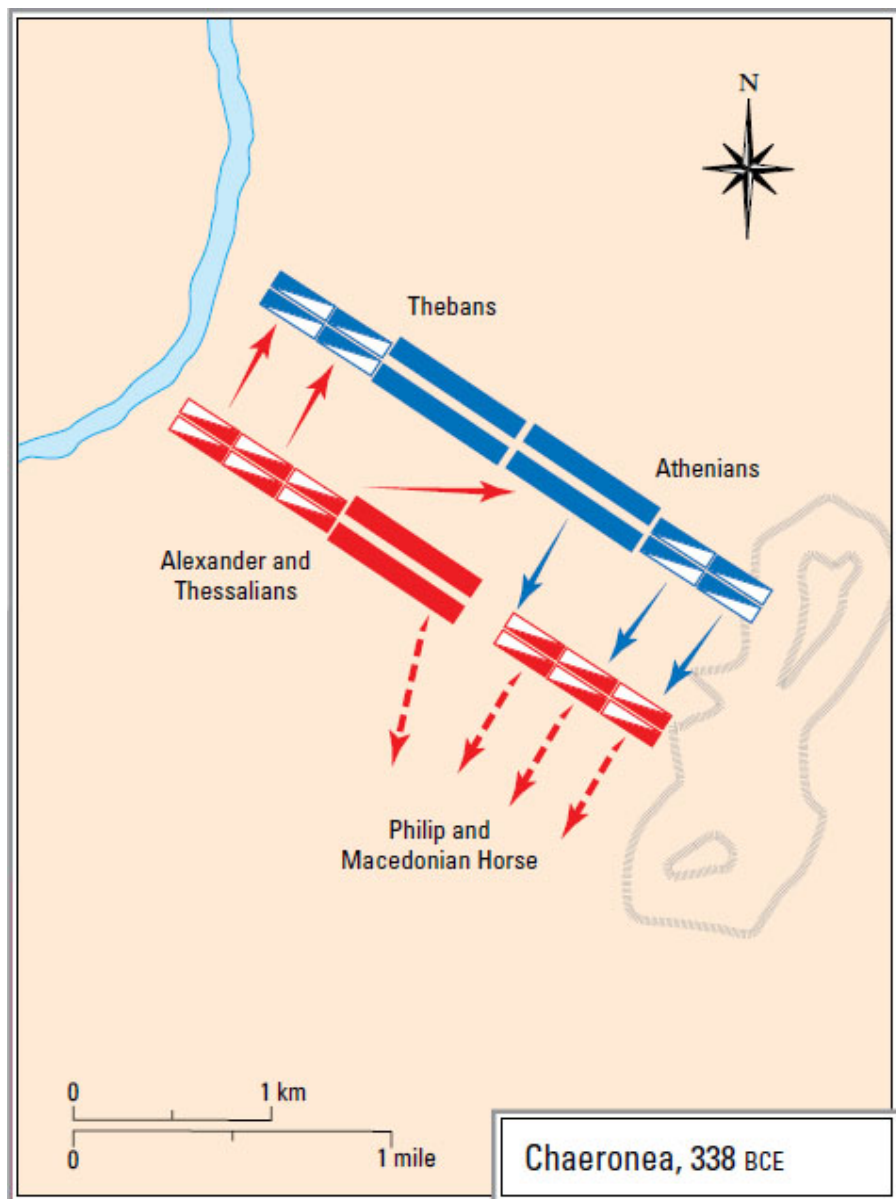
This was a major battle in May between the army of Alexander the Great and the Persian forces in Asia Minor. The effort of the Persian satraps to stifle the war at its beginning collapsed in a disastrous failure.

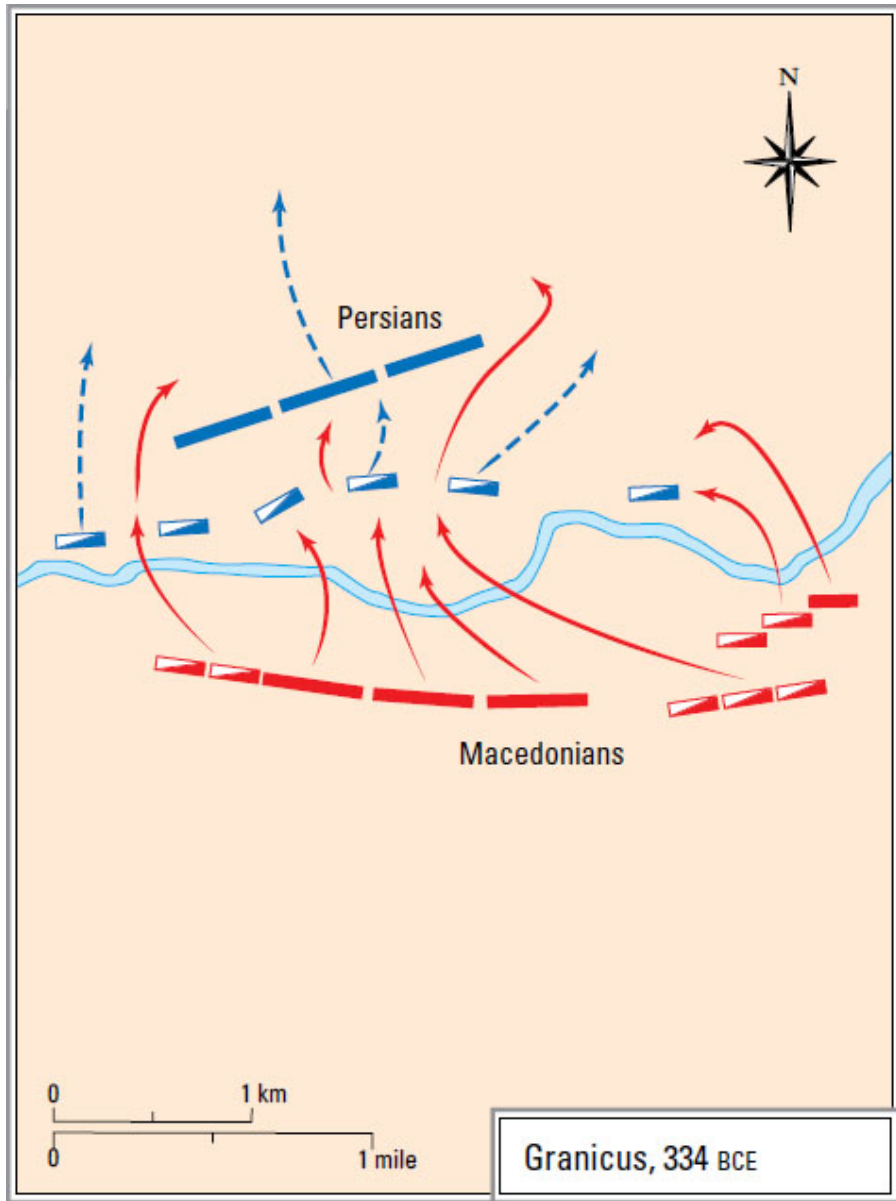
Ignoring the advice of Memnon to withdraw and devastate the Persian countryside before Alexander and his army's advance, the local satraps instead chose to protect their revenue base and launch a 'decapitation strike' against Alexander upon his actual entry into their territory, thus forfeiting the initiative and allowing Alexander to fight a cavalry battle upon his own terms with 1500 Macedonian elite *hetairoi* and 3500 allied horse. The Persians awaited him on the far side of the stream with 20,000 elite cavalry and a reserve force of 18,000 Greek mercenary infantry, which they kept fatally far behind their frontline. Alexander, for the first time, unveiled what would become his usual strategy against the Persians in the early stage of the war – an oblique attack upon the enemy left while the phalanx of Macedonian pikeman, equipped with the long and counter-weighted sarissa, approached towards the enemy's left centre. Anticipating such tactics, Memnon had himself put the bulk of the Persian horse on the extreme left, which Alexander avoided, holding it in place with light troops and skirmishing cavalry while the main onslaught was further down the enemy line.



Parmenio commanded the more defensive portion of the army, the phalanx of some 30,000 infantry, the pike formation connected to the cavalry by elite troops called *hypaspists*. As the phalanx ground on towards the Persian centre- left, Persian commanders including Rhoesaces, Spithridates and Darius's son-in-law Mithridates, took their own cavalry commands directly against Alexander. In the onset, the Macedonian cavalry version of the sarissa proved superior to the shorter Persian lance/javelin. Alexander's life, campaigns and empire were saved when one Cleitus 'The Black' severed Spithridates' arm and saved the king from a blow from behind. Under the fierceness of

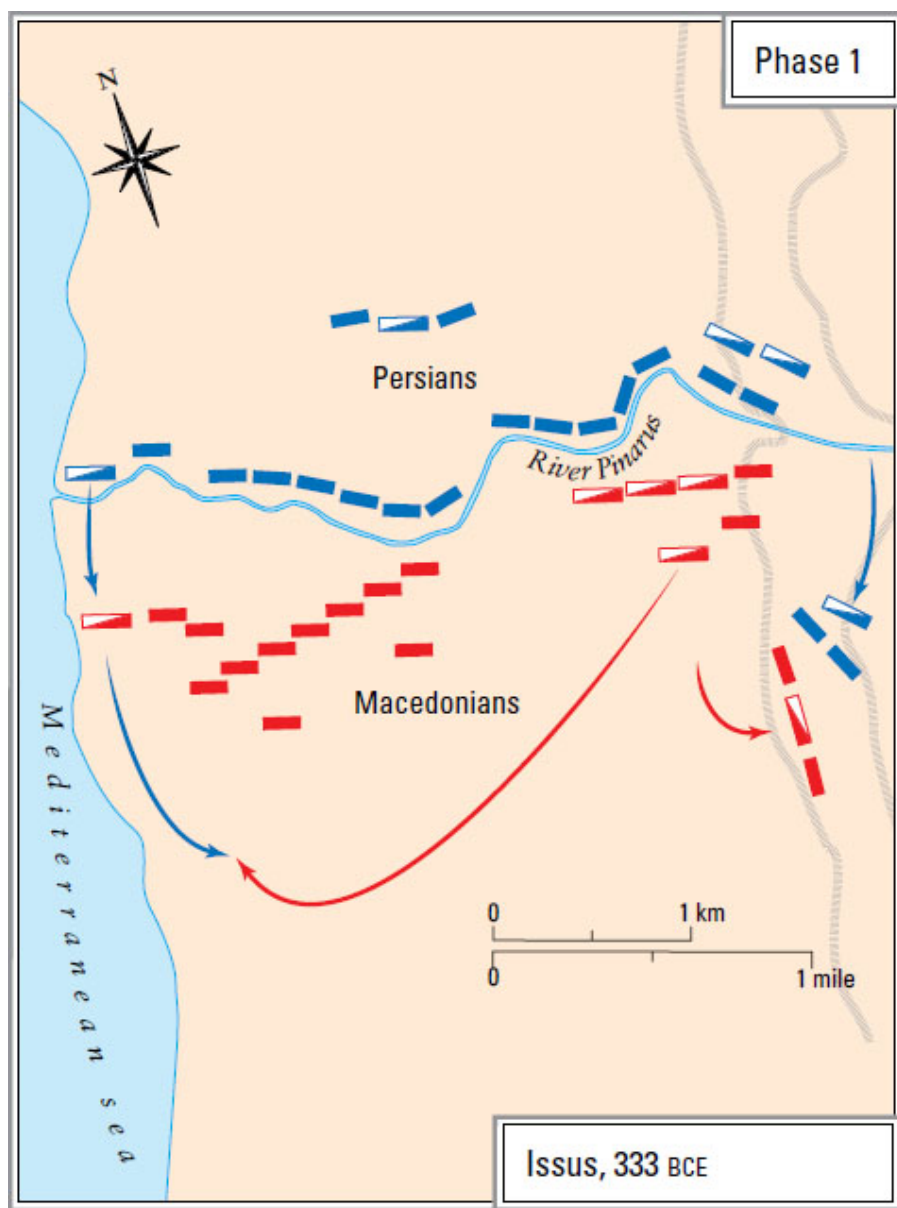
Alexander's onslaught, the Persian cavalry collapsed and fled, leaving the Greek mercenaries to buy time for the Persians' retreat with their destruction between Alexander's cavalry and arriving phalanx. Alexander set a pattern early on for exploiting each Persian collapse as vigorously as possible; Persians slain on the battlefield were enemies he would never have to fight or subdue again. The official report of Alexander's losses listed 95 dead from the cavalry, another 30 in the infantry. The wounded numbered as much as 1200, all of whom Alexander visited personally.





Alexander made significant practical use of his first major victory over the Persians, sending spoils of the battle to Athens. There they adorned the Acropolis and made reference to the refusal of the Spartans to join the League of Corinth, which Alexander had formed before the war to launch what he termed a Greek 'war of revenge' against the Persians for the Persian Wars of a century earlier. Extermination of the surrendering Greek mercenaries found convenient justification in the nature of this 'Holy War,' while removing those and potential future recruits from the battlefield. Statues of the 35 slain Macedonian *hetairoi* were placed on the

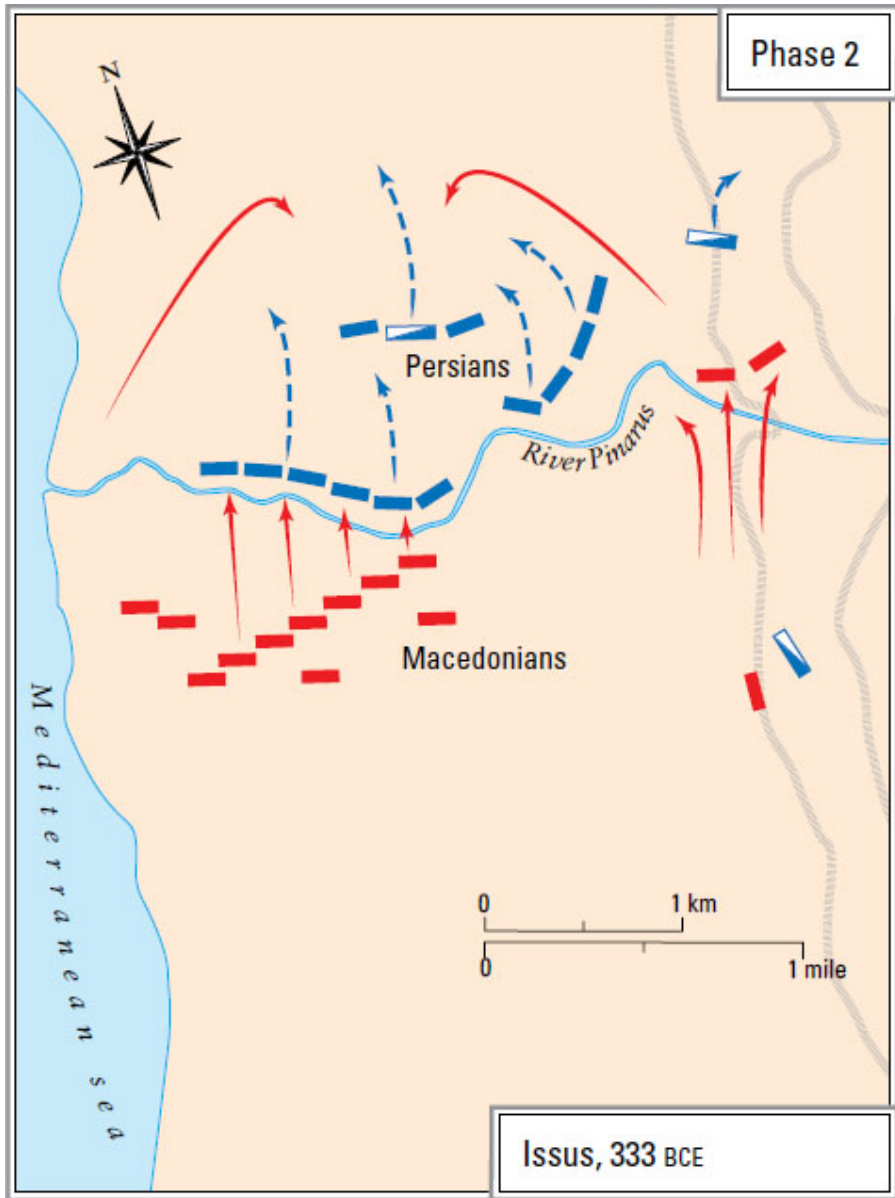
Athenian acropolis and reminded visitors of the first major Greek success against the Persians since the Peloponnesian Wars. Alexander provided honourable burial for the Persian dead, and kept the existing offices and revenue streams of the Persian Empire in place by creating Calas satrap of the conquered Hellespontine Phrygia.



■ ISSUS, 333 BCE

The first battle fought in November by Alexander the Great directly against Darius, the 'Great King' of the Persian Empire, was a disastrous defeat for the Persian army at its full strength.

The speed of Alexander's southward advance after several checks combined to let Darius take the field personally with the largest force Alexander had yet faced: as many as 400,000 Persian infantry, including the Persian *kardakes*, armed as Greek hoplites, 100,000 Persian cavalry from throughout the empire, and a back-up force of actual Greek hoplite mercenaries numbering a total of 20,000–30,000 men. Alexander reversed his march with the objective of engaging Darius's army, Darius having taken his own force southward down the line of Alexander's advance, slaughtering Macedonian wounded at Issus itself. Alexander picked a battlefield at the far side of Bailan Pass, alerted to the Persian advance by scouts.



The Persian line consisted of their cavalry on the right, the Greek hoplites in the centre with the *kardakes* on their either flank in support and a flanking force of infantry and cavalry on the Persian extreme right. Alexander's archers repelled these while his cavalry once again crossed a river, the Pinarus, and surged upward into the Persians. As the phalanx climbed the river bank, a crisis occurred when the Greek hoplites struck its disordered ranks at the moment of greatest vulnerability. Alexander's victory in the cavalry skirmish allowed his horse and supporting infantry to take the Greeks in flank, some 8000 of them escaping over the mountains by holding

formation.

Darius's flight from the battlefield allowed the war to go on, but left the Persians in disorder to be annihilated by the vengeful Macedonians. Darius's wives and treasury became Alexander's booty.

■ GORDIUM, 333 BCE

Gordum was the ancient capital of Phrygia at which Alexander reunited the halves of his army after separate winter quartering. When Alexander's sword cut the 'Gordian Knot' there, it fulfilled a prophecy that he would conquer Asia.

■ TYRE, 332 BCE

In the culminating battle of Alexander's campaign to reduce the Persian fleet by capturing its Phoenician bases, Alexander laid siege to the island city of Tyre for eight months, only capturing it when his own fleet arrived from Greece.

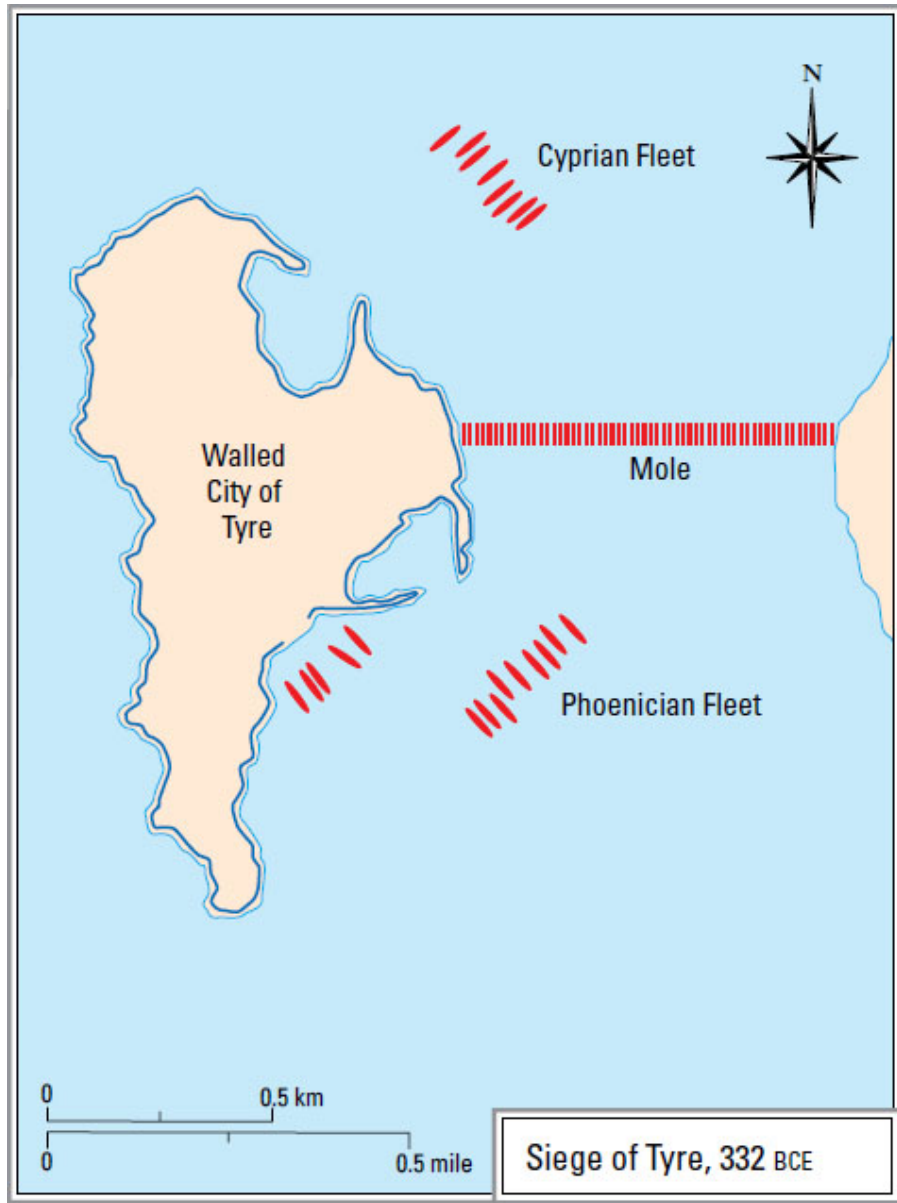
■ GAZA, 332 BCE

Alexander took two months to overcome a fierce defence by the Persian garrison of this port city in a very strategic position on the route from Syria to Egypt. A Persian eunuch, Batis, commanded a force levied from the native Nabataean population, the city itself protected by a high wall, mud and the shifting sand dunes allowed to pile up against it. In the course of Alexander's seven-month siege of neighboring Tyre, there had been ample time to provision and fortify the bastion. Alexander unleashed his siege train on the city, the work of his engineer Aristobulus eventually managing to breach the city's defences. Alexander was badly wounded during the siege and sold the population as slaves after Homerically dragging Batis's body around the walls behind his chariot. Gaza's fall severed Egypt from the rest of the Persian Empire.

■ ARBELA (GAUGAMELA), 331 BCE

Gaugamela was a decisive battle in which Alexander's war-seasoned army utterly crushed the full force of the Persian Empire under the command of the Great King. In a tactical masterpiece, Alexander destroyed organized Persian resistance to his conquest. Persian forces numbered some 200,000 infantry and 45,000 horse, while Macedonian forces totalled 40,000 infantry and some 7000 cavalry.

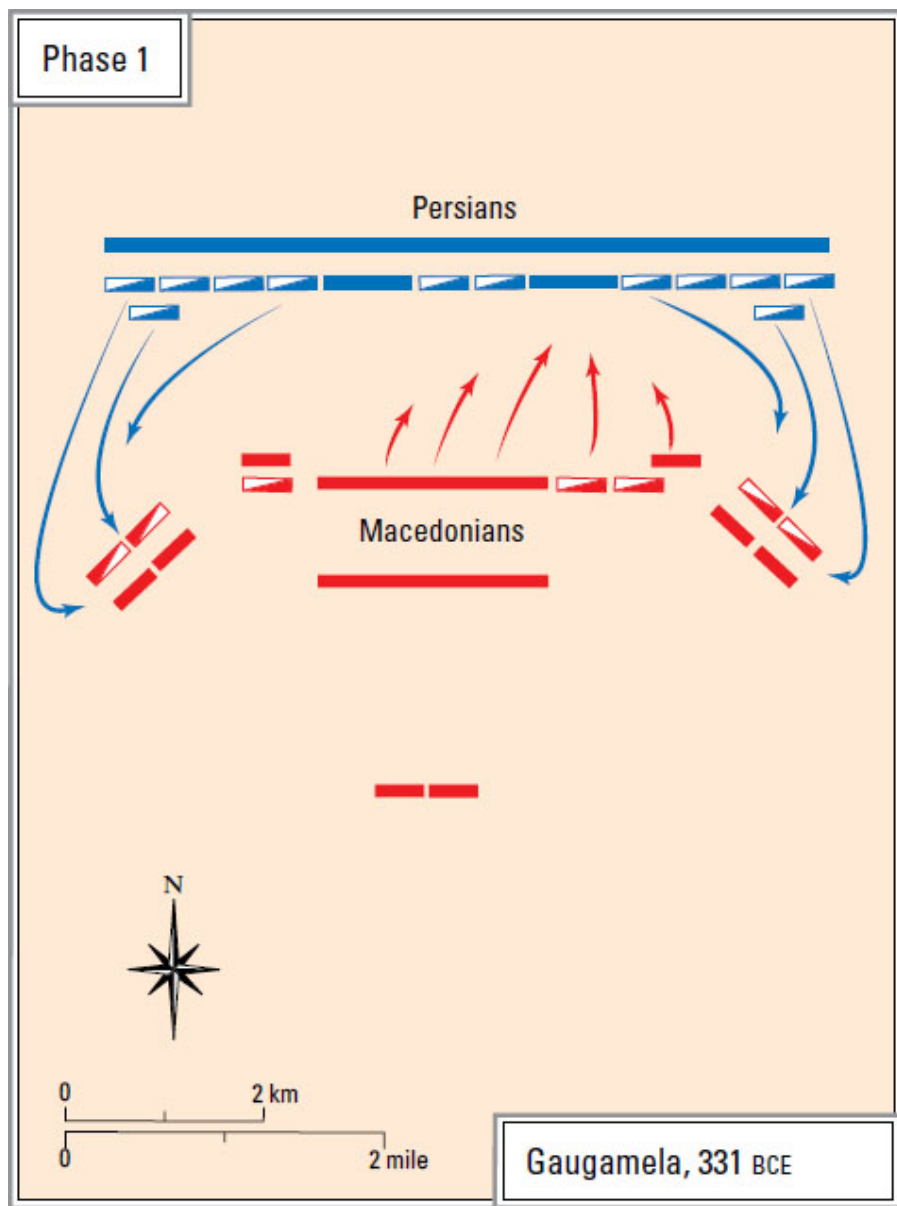
The Persian ruler Darius exploited Alexander's diversion south into Egypt to accumulate the full resources of his empire, which included a number of war elephants, transported at great expense from the easternmost frontiers. Untrained horses shied at the sight and scent of the strange monsters, which carried archers and javelin throwers. Those and 200 scythe-equipped chariots buoyed Darius's hopes of finally cracking the deadly Macedonian phalanx.



Alexander's plan to capture and supplant him allowed Darius to control Alexander's movements, by being the primary objective of Alexander's campaign. He chose a wide and level battlefield near the city of Arbela, going so far as to have the terrain levelled to assist the action of his chariots. For his own part, Alexander had taken the precaution of scouting the battlefield thoroughly. Darius's preparations provided his enemy with an excellent preview of his plans.

Alexander camped 6.4km from Darius's army, just far enough to prevent a surprise attack. Such was Alexander's confidence in victory

that he left his troops comfortably encamped, while the Persians passed a long, cold desert night in formation under arms. Alexander himself, having rejected Parmenio's suggestion for a night attack, had to be roused at daybreak.



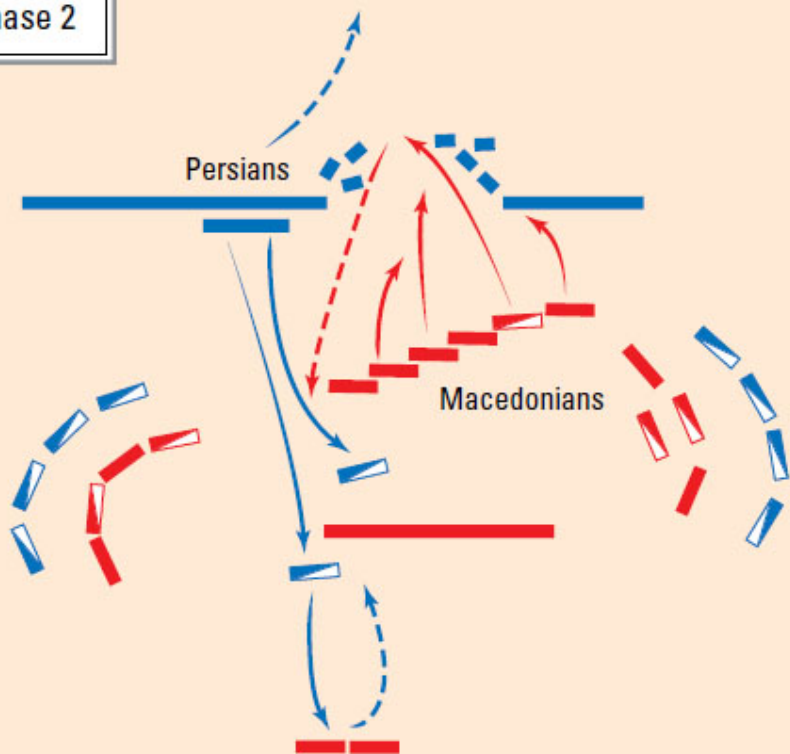
Alexander's army stuck to his proven battle plan against the Persians: an oblique thrust with his elite cavalry supported by the grinding advance of the phalanx, the latter being set directly for Darius's visible position in the centre of his line. The movement of Alexander's thrust would create a gap in the ranks of the enemy as

each man sought to cover himself with his neighbour's shield. Special forces of Thessalians and elite infantry called *hypaspists* protected Alexander's own flanks.

Behind his frontline, under the worried Parmenio, Alexander placed a reserve phalanx, another rectangle of bristling pikes as difficult to attack as the frontline. The Thessalians and *hypaspists* would fall back into contact with the second line. In effect, as his smaller army waded into the massed Persian forces, Alexander's forces were capable of forming a square in the event that Persian numbers engulfed them.

Alexander's archers and javelin throwers killed the charioteers of the scythed chariots, traditionally used to slaughter a disorganized and retreating enemy, the scythes taking a fearful toll on frightened and defenceless men. In the face of Alexander's veterans, they failed miserably. The elephants also failed; having no stake in the battle sufficient to wade into the bristling spears and arrows of the enemy army, they proved useless and uncontrollable.

Phase 2



Gaugamela, 331 BCE

Darius had nothing to stop the slow advance of the Macedonian infantry and cavalry towards where Darius and his court watched in terror. Onrushing Persian cavalry bypassed the Thessalians and *hypaspists* on a flank and drove for the Macedonian rear. Parmenio had not been able to keep the reserve in good order, which allowed those Persians to move kilometres to the rear to plunder the Macedonian camp. The only result was to prevent Alexander's pursuit of Darius when he instead had to respond to Parmenio's request for what proved to be unneeded support. An infuriated satrap, Bessus, however, executed Darius some time later.

■ MEGALOPOLIS, 331 BCE

This was an unsuccessful siege of the capital city of Arcadia. With Alexander in Asia, Agis rallied the remnants of Sparta's army and allies and, with mercenaries, assaulted the city. Antipater and the Macedonians easily scattered them.

■ PANDOSIA, 331 BCE

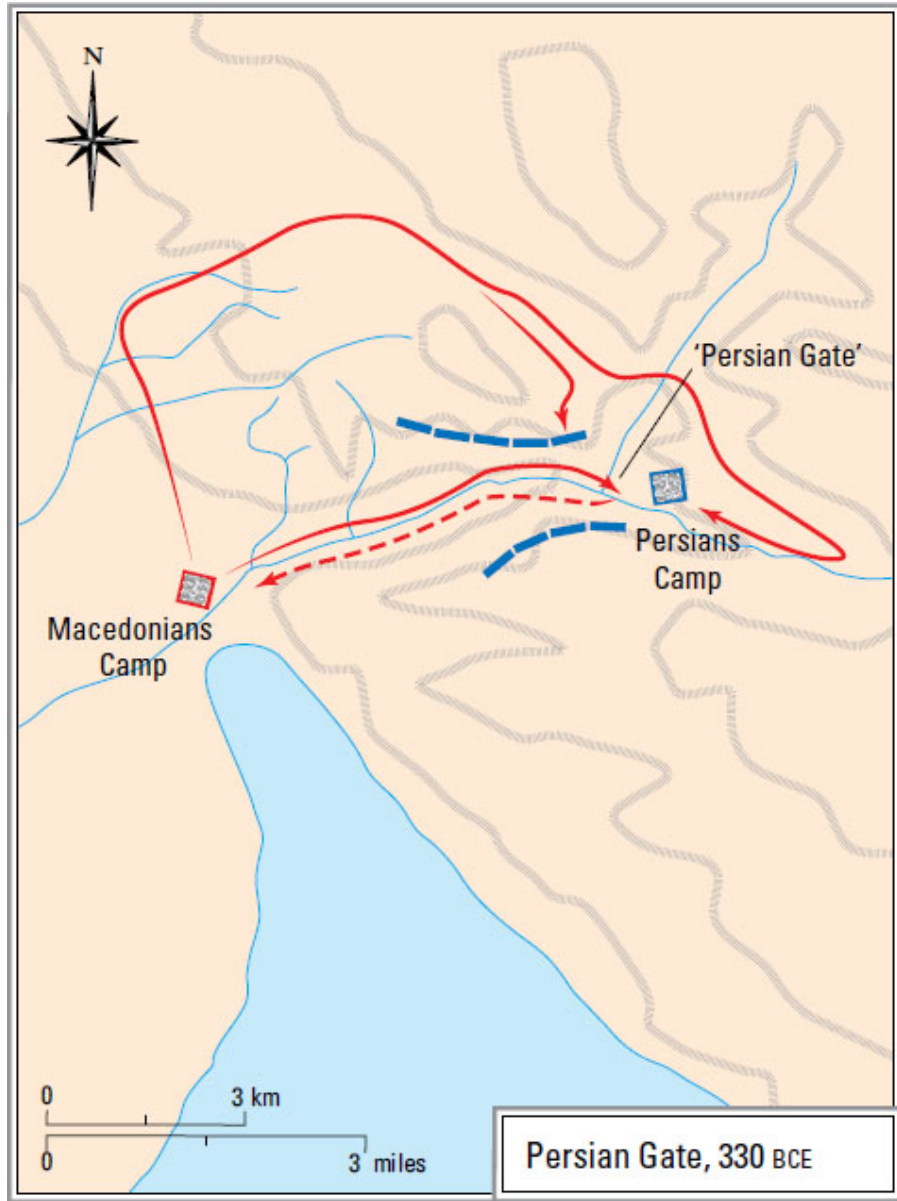
This battle in southern Italy was between the Epirotes, allied Thurii and the rebel and powerful city of Taras. An assassin killed Alexander of Epirus during the battle, ending Epirus's efforts to create an Italian empire in Italy.

■ PERSIAN GATE, 330 BCE

This battle consisted of an effort at the pass by Ariobarzanes, satrap of Persis, to delay Alexander's eastern march from Persepolis. After a costly repulse, Alexander found a shepherd who showed him a trail by which he turned the pass.

■ SOGDIAN ROCK, 327 BCE

This Afghan mountain fortress held the remnants of Persian resistance, was considered impregnable and was the location of the hold-outs' families. The defenders taunted that Alexander would need flying soldiers to take it. Alexander found 300 mountaineers amongst his army who, with casualties and pitons, ascended a peak above the fortress during the night and occupied it. The Afghanis surrendered, Alexander finding and marrying Princess Roxane, becoming Afghan himself and pacifying the region.



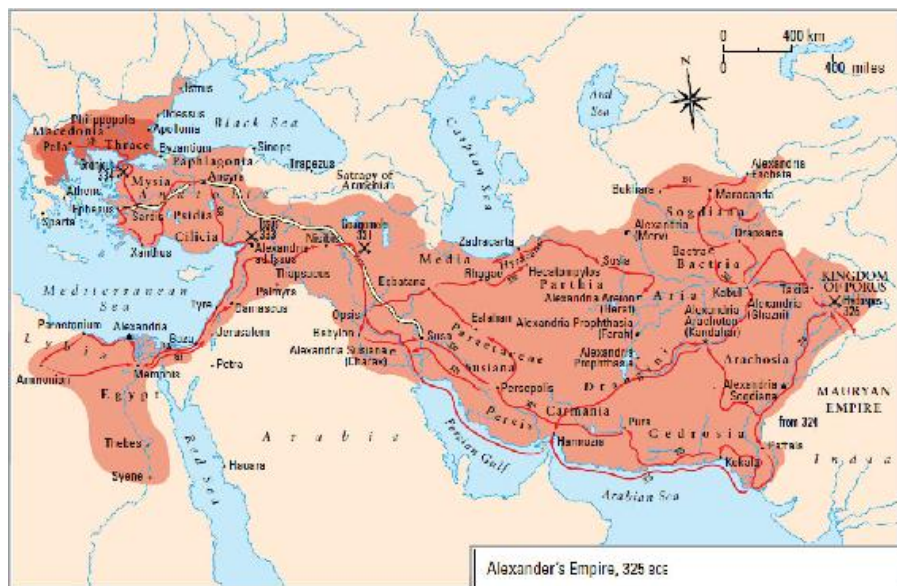
■ AORNOS, 327 BCE

Fortress on the Indus, held by Pathans against Alexander. Alexander bridged the ravine to the fortress's spire with a combination bridge and dam under cover of his catapults, eventually taking the fortress after severe reverses.

■ HYDASPES RIVER, 326 BCE

This was a major battle fought near the summer solstice in which Alexander, with great difficulty, defeated the armies of the Rajahs Porus and Abisares as they sought to oppose Alexander and his army's entrance into India. The battle was Alexander's last decisive major

victory.



Porus and Abisares had mustered a very substantial force of 200 well-trained elephants and 300 war chariots, supported by 20,000 infantry. Some 4000 cavalry supported the Indians' flanks. The war chariots and elephants both carried javelin throwers and archers, the ancient sources remarking upon how the size of the Indian formation had the appearance of a fortified city. Alexander's army, reduced by forces left behind to occupy conquered territory, numbered roughly 6000 heavy infantry, 4000 lighter troops, 4000 conventional cavalry and 1000 mounted archers.

Alexander had to force the crossing of the Hydaspes river at the height of flood. With the Indian forces so ready to receive him, for several days Alexander made demonstrations and countermarches back and forth on his side of the river in order to fatigue the Indians and lower their wariness. Finally Alexander himself, after a night march, crossed upstream unopposed with his most mobile 6000 infantry and 5000 cavalry, leaving the main body under Craterus at the original river crossing.

Porus shifted his formation and moved to engage, with Alexander refusing the left flank of his cavalry vanguard and engaging personally himself with his right. As the Indians rode into the attack, the refused left of the Macedonian cavalry under Coenus fell upon their flank, collapsing the Indian horse. The Indian cavalry retreated back into the elephants, throwing them into confusion and damaging Porus's formation. Alexander's forces now began a holding attack to keep the Indians' attention.

Craterus, meanwhile, had forced the river while Alexander and

Coenus held Porus's attention and took the Rajah's army in flank. Drawing upon their experience at Gaugamela, the Macedonians targeted the drivers of the Indian chariots and the elephants' mahouts, neutralizing Porus's remaining mobile assets. As previously, the elephants would not attempt to penetrate the bristling pikes of the Macedonian phalanx, and became unmanageable, sowing further confusion within the collapsing Indian ranks.

Porus held his ground and fought to the last, but the rest of the Indian army fell into rout, which the Macedonian cavalry exploited, ruthlessly inflicting further casualties while daylight lasted. Porus was wounded and brought to Alexander after his capture, the two commanders beginning a firm friendship that made Porus Alexander's loyal vassal to the end of Alexander's life. Abisares, who had not been present at the battle, offered his submission later.

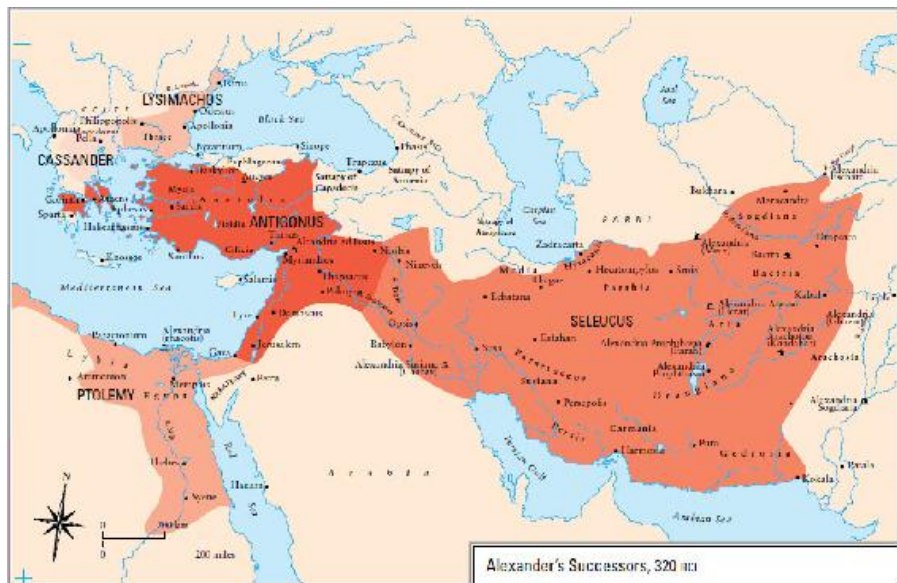
Alexander took advantage of the resulting stability of his new eastern frontier to found two Greek cities, one, Nicaea, on the site of his own crossing, and the other on the riverbank at Craterus's suggestion named after his deceased horse, Bucephala. By so doing, he both established Greek civilization at its furthest east and permanently secured his river crossing into India. Soon after the Hydaspes, however, Alexander's army exercised its technical sovereignty within the unwritten Macedonian constitution and refused to follow the king further eastward, thus forcing his return back to the Persia, where Alexander died of a fever at Babylon in 321 BCE.

■ CRANNON (ATHENS REVOLT), 322 BCE

This was a battle in Thessaly in which the converging Macedonian armies of Antipater and Craterus sundered a coalition army of Greeks in revolt after Alexander's death. The battle was nearly even, but the Greek allies surrendered individually.

■ CAMPAIGNS OF CHANDRAGUPTA, 310–303 BCE

Having seized power from the Nanda dynasty in 322 BCE, Chandragupta Maurya consolidated his control and then rapidly took control of Northwest India. This required the conquest of several satrapies created by Alexander the Great, and caused a conflict with the successor state of Seleucid Persia. A Seleucid expedition was defeated in 305 BCE opening the way for a campaign of conquest westwards. The war was concluded by a treaty that granted Chandragupta territory in return for military assistance.



Mauryan Wars 322–185 BCE

■ KALINGA, 262 BCE

The independent state of Kalinga had aligned itself with enemies of the Maurya Empire, prompting an invasion in overwhelming force. The resulting carnage prompted Emperor Ashoka to embrace Buddhism and to renounce violence.

Hellenistic/Diadochi/Greek Wars 322–146 BCE

■ PARAETAKENA (PARAECENE), 317 BCE

A battle in Media during the War of the Successors between the Macedonian forces of Eumenes of Cardia and Antigonus Monophthalmus. Eumenes anticipated Antigonus's river crossing, inflicting casualties, but failing to stop his rival's advance.

■ GABIENE, 316 BCE

Final battle in Media between Eumenes of Cardia and Antigonus Monophthalmus. After Antigonus captured Eumenes' supplies, Macedonian elite forces, the Argyraspids, betrayed Eumenes to Antigonus, who rid himself of a formidable rival by executing him.

■ GAZA, 312 BCE

Decisive strategic defeat for Antigonus Monophthalmus by the combined armies of Ptolemy and Seleucus. Antigonus's son, Demetrius, lost a large-scale battle near the city, costing his father control of Syria and hope of conquering Egypt.

■ SALAMIS (CYPRUS), 308 BCE

Demetrius Poliorcetes with 118 warships held 60 ships of Ptolemy blockaded at their Cyprian base with just 10 vessels, defeating 140 relieving Egyptian galleys at sea with the remainder. Demetrius's victorious left rolled up the Egyptian centre.

■ SALAMIS (CYPRUS), 306 BCE

Successful Antigoniid storming of Ptolemy's Cyprian naval base by Demetrius Poliorcetes. Demetrius employed sea-borne catapults and a moving multi-storey siege tower against the Egyptian defenders. The capture of Salamis much improved the Antigoniid position in the Mediterranean.

■ SIEGE OF RHODES, 305–304 BCE

An epic siege in which Demetrius Poliorcetes and his siege train failed to reduce the island democracy's capital. Demetrius's monster terrestrial and naval siege engines met equivalent responses from the defenders, supplied by the Antigoniids' rivals.

■ IPSOS, 304 BCE

Catastrophic defeat of the Antigoniid Empire in Asia, leading to the death of Antigonus Monophthalmus and Demetrius Poliorcetes' retreat to the islands and port cities of the eastern Mediterranean. The battle took place in eastern Central Asia Minor near where Lysimachus, ruler of Thrace, successfully eluded Antigonus's army in a southward march. Lysimachus rendezvoused with Seleucus, who had ceded Alexander's conquest in India to obtain 480 elephants, which he had

transported at tremendous expense across Persia. The two allies combined 64,000 foot, 10,500 cavalry and 120 chariots to move against Antigonus's 70,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry and 75 elephants. Demetrius's initial charge with the cavalry succeeded, but Demetrius was unable to prevent the allied infantry and elephants from crushing his father's infantry and body in the resulting disaster. Their success in this battle prompted the popularity of elephants in Hellenistic warfare.

■ **THERMOPYLAE, 279 BCE**

A Greek confederation failed to hold the pass against the Gauls under Brennus seeking to move into and plunder the cities of Greece. After a repulse, the Gauls bypassed the defenders, who evacuated by sea.

■ **CORUPEDION, 281 BCE**

Decisive defeat in late summer of Lysimachus, 80, by Seleucus, 77, invading Thrace from Asia Minor. In this final battle between Alexander's former generals, the armies fought in western Asia Minor. Lysimachus perished in the fighting.

■ MANTINEA, 207 BCE

The battle of Mantinea was caused by an attack by Machanidas, the tyrant of Sparta, against Philopoemen and the Achaean League, mustering in the nearby city. Machinadas's catapults scattered the Achaean mercenaries, but Philopoemen, rallying his forces on better ground, defeated and killed Machanidas.

■ CHIOS, 201 BCE

Large fleet action between the navies of Philip V of Macedon and the Rhodians and Attalus of Pergamon. The Macedonians recovered from initial reverses, but Philip had to abandon his effort to capture neighbouring Samos.

■ LADE, 201 BCE

Naval defeat by Philip V of Macedon of the Rhodian fleet as it sought to prevent his conquest of Rhodian possessions on the mainland opposite the island. The Rhodians afterwards appealed to Rome for aid.

■ CORINTH, 198 BCE

Unsuccessful siege of Philip V's southernmost fortress in Greece by the younger Flamininus and the fleets of Attalus of Pergamon and Rhodes. A naval bombardment breached the Macedonian defences, but a phalanx in the breach held.

■ AOUS, 198 BCE

Philip V's fortified position preventing a juncture of Flamininus's army with Rome's Aetolian allies to the south. Flamininus found a local guide to take the Romans behind and above Philip's lines, successfully routing the Macedonians.

■ CYNOSCEPHALAE, 197 BCE

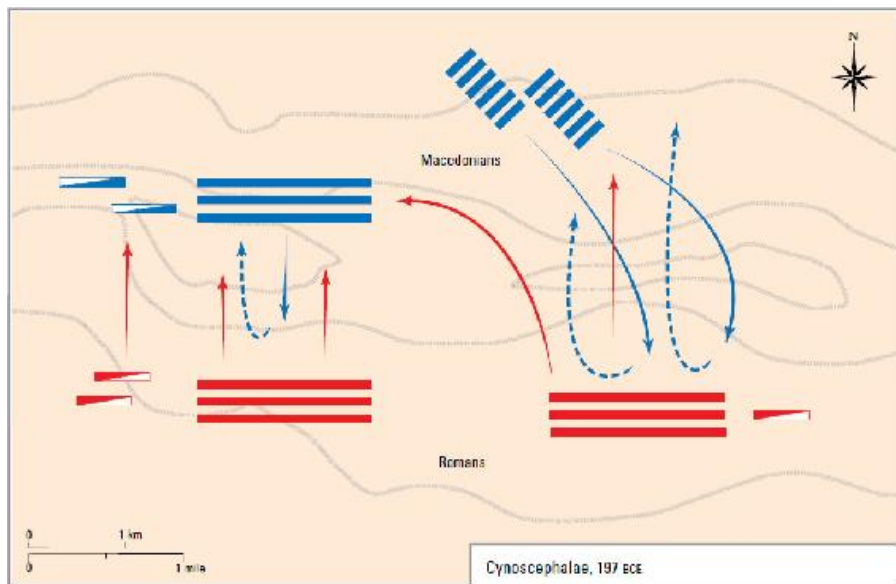
Cynesccephalae was the decisive battle of the Second Macedonian War, the set-piece clash of the Macedonian phalanx with the Roman manipular legion. Reinforced by veterans returning from Carthage, Flamininus took two legions in pursuit of Philip V's full strength, consolidated in Thessaly for battle. Roman skirmishers and allied cavalry moving up one side of a ridge encountered their Macedonian counterparts, prompting Flamininus to launch an all-out assault before the Macedonian formations were fully ready for battle. Philip's consolidated forces on the right formed a deep phalanx. This formation crested the ridge and drove down upon the legionaries, the long pikes of the Macedonians still proving effective in pushing the legionaries back. Flamininus took his elephants and unengaged right, rolling up the disorganized Macedonians opposite while the last line of the retreating legion took the Macedonians in flank, completing the rout with heavy casualties.

■ GYTHEUM, 194 BCE

City of the Achaean League besieged by Nabis, tyrant of Sparta. Philopoemen and the League moved before the Romans could effectively intervene, striking against Nabis by land and sea. The Achaeans lost at sea to Nabis's blockading squadron when a recommissioned war memorial foundered, and Gytheum fell. The Achaeans then destroyed Nabis's disorganized forces in a night attack and besieged Sparta, while Roman marines captured Gytheum and imposed a peace.

■ THERMOPYLAE II, 191 BCE

Antiochus III, with 14,000 infantry and 500 cavalry, held the historic pass against Roman forces seeking to evict the Seleucids from Greece. Cato the Censor led a detachment around an unguarded trail, causing a disastrous rout.



■ PYDNA (THIRD MACEDONIAN WAR), 172–167 BCE

Philip V's heir Perseus's efforts to restore Macedonian prestige in Greece led to friction and conflict with the Achaean League and Eumenes of Pergamon, both of whom were successful in drawing Rome's attention back to the tense situation in the Balkans. Upon Rome's declaration of hostilities, Perseus retreated behind the safety of his borders and prolonged the war with defensive campaigning. The strategy was a sensible one, which strained Rome's alliances and supply streams. Perseus moved his forces into a strong position near his capital at Pydna and awaited Aemilius Paulus's attack.

Two rivers protected the Macedonian flanks on the ridge where the phalanx awaited; Paulus accordingly was reluctant to engage. For unknown reasons Perseus's phalanx charged down the hill into the Roman line, unsupported by their cavalry. A sacrificial stand by the

Achaean apparently created enough disorder for the Roman legionaries to cut their way in and utterly destroy the Macedonian army and empire.

■ **CALLICINUS, 171 BCE**

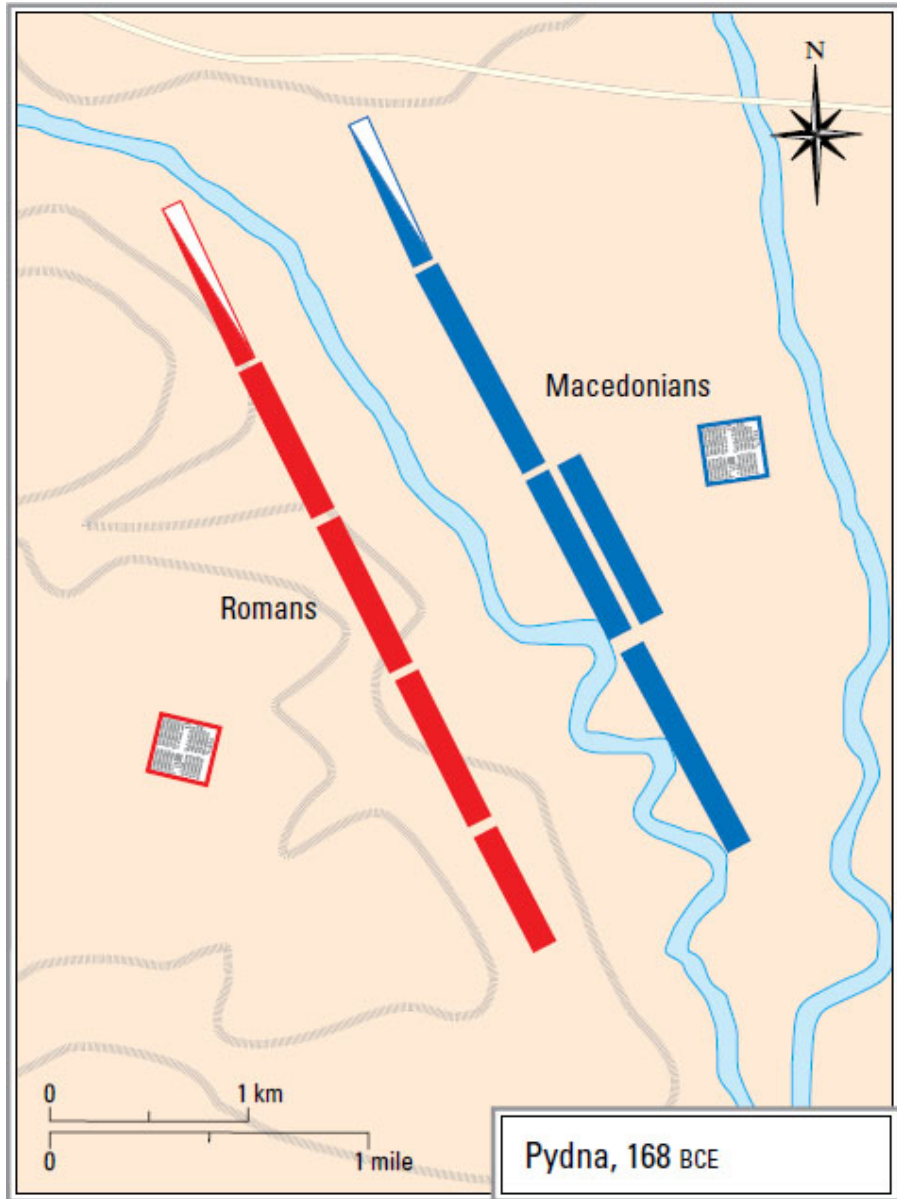
Opening engagement of the Third Macedonian War. Perseus had 39,000 infantry and 4000 cavalry, while the Roman army of Licinius consisted of two legions containing 12,000 largely inexperienced Italian troops. Perseus forced the Romans to retreat.

■ **PYDNA, 148 BCE**

One Andriscus, claiming Perseus as his father, seized control of Macedonia in 149. After defeating a legion under Juventius Thalna, two legions under Caecilius Metellus crushed Andriscus near the capital of Pydna. Rome then annexed Macedonia.

■ **CORINTH, 146 BCE**

Site of the Achaean League's last effort against Roman domination of Greece; the army of Consul L. Mummius obliterated the League's final levy and levelled the ancient and prosperous city, selling its inhabitants into slavery.



Pyrrhic War 281–275 BCE

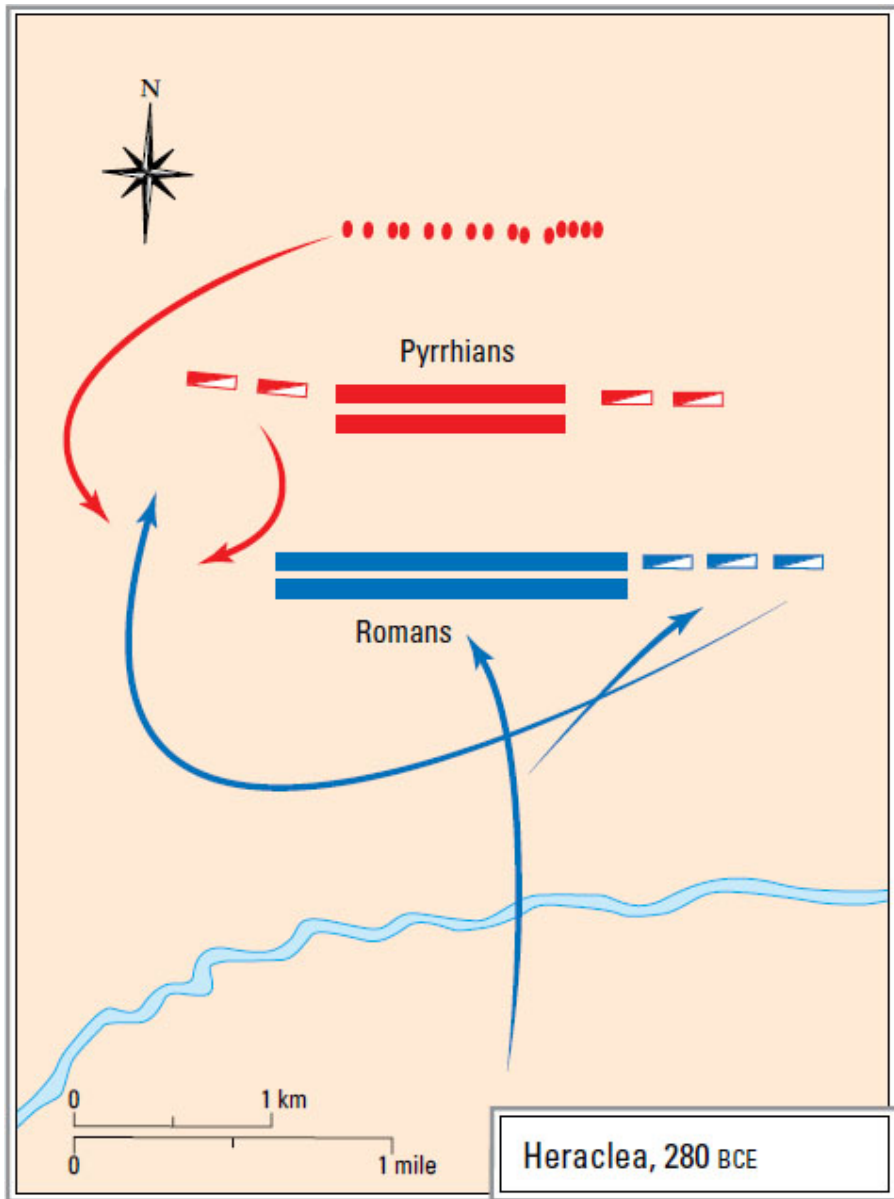
■ THURII, 281 BCE

The city of Thurii, an ally of Rome, was attacked and plundered by forces from Tarentum. This led to a clash between Rome and Tarentum, and ultimately to the intervention of Pyrrhus of Epirus.

■ HERACLEA, 280 BCE

Shortly after Pyrrhus of Epirus landed in Italy, Roman forces were sent to dislodge him. Pyrrhus preferred to avoid battle for the time being, as the Tarentines had not managed to raise a suitable army to fight alongside the newly arrived Greeks.

Pyrrhus needed time to train up a Tarentine force and to receive reinforcements from other cities that might be willing to fight against Rome. He thus positioned his army behind the River Siris and made camp. Determined to force a battle before the enemy was reinforced, the Roman commander detached his cavalry on a long flank march into the enemy rear. This attack was used to cover the Roman infantry's river crossing, forcing Pyrrhus to accept battle. Pyrrhus led from the front and came close to being killed. When it became obvious that the Romans were singling him out, the king switched clothing with a subordinate. This action may have saved his life, but it did cause the Greek army to lose heart when they apparently saw their king fall. Pyrrhus rallied his troops by showing them that he was still alive.



With morale restored, Pyrrhus deployed his war elephants, which the Romans had never before encountered. The Roman cavalry was routed and the infantry severely disordered by this assault. The Roman force was saved from complete disaster by the tendency of wounded elephants to run amok, disrupting their own side's formations.

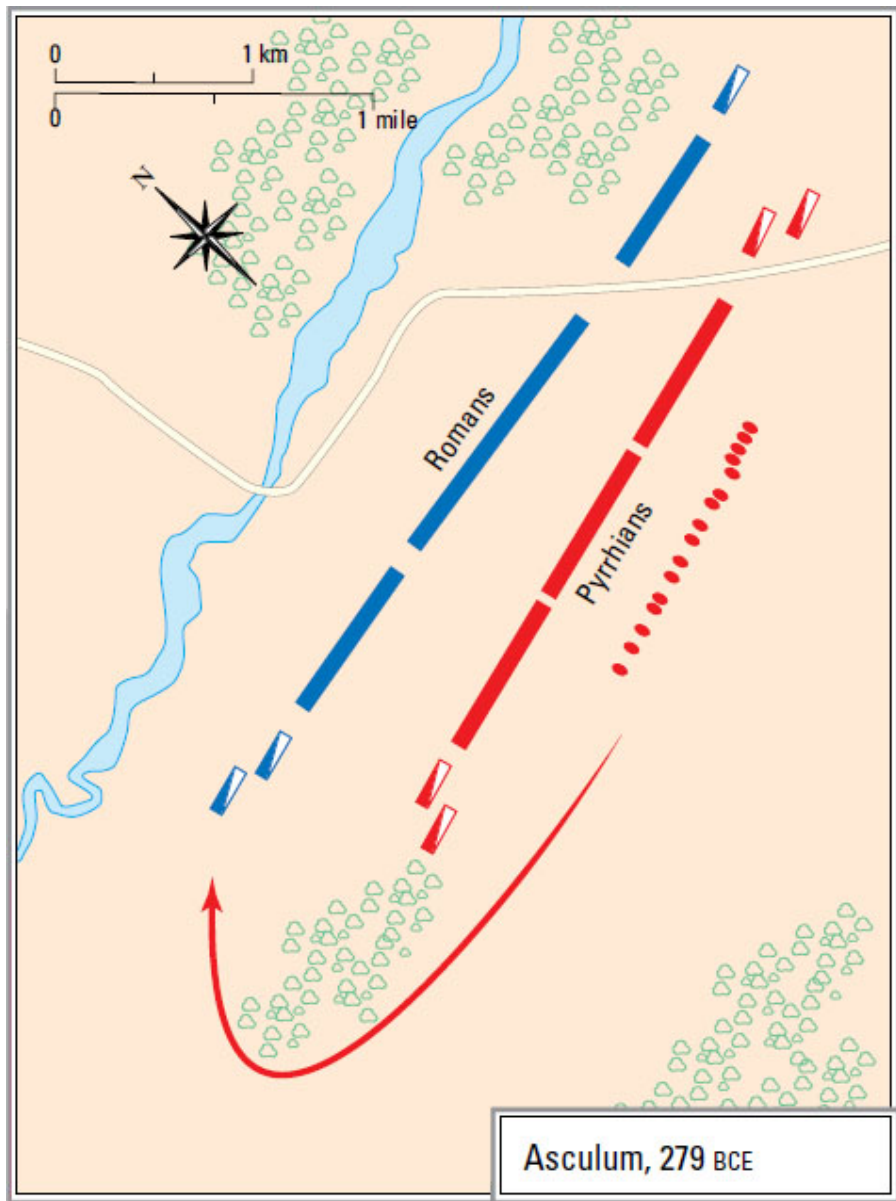
The Roman force disengaged and the Greeks were able to advance almost as far as Rome itself. However, both sides had taken very heavy losses and Pyrrhus was not confident of victory if he assaulted the city. His force pulled back and wintered in Tarentum.

■ ASCULUM, 279 BCE

After first encountering Greek war elephants at Heraclea, the Romans had developed anti-elephant tactics. On the first day of the battle of Asculum, the wooded and hilly terrain impeded the elephants and cavalry, resulting in a bloody but inconclusive clash between infantry forces. An aggressive redeployment by the Greeks forced the Romans to fight in terrain better suited to the use of elephants and the dense phalanx of the Greeks. A flank attack by the Greek elephants broke the Roman cavalry and caused a hurried withdrawal, giving the Greeks possession of the battlefield. Heavy losses on the winning side led to the concept of the 'Pyrrhic Victory'.

■ SYRACUSE, c.279 BCE

To prevent King Pyrrhus from using Syracuse as a base for operations on Sicily, Carthaginian forces allied to Rome besieged the city. Pyrrhus landed Eryx and Panormus, then marched to break the siege of Syracuse.



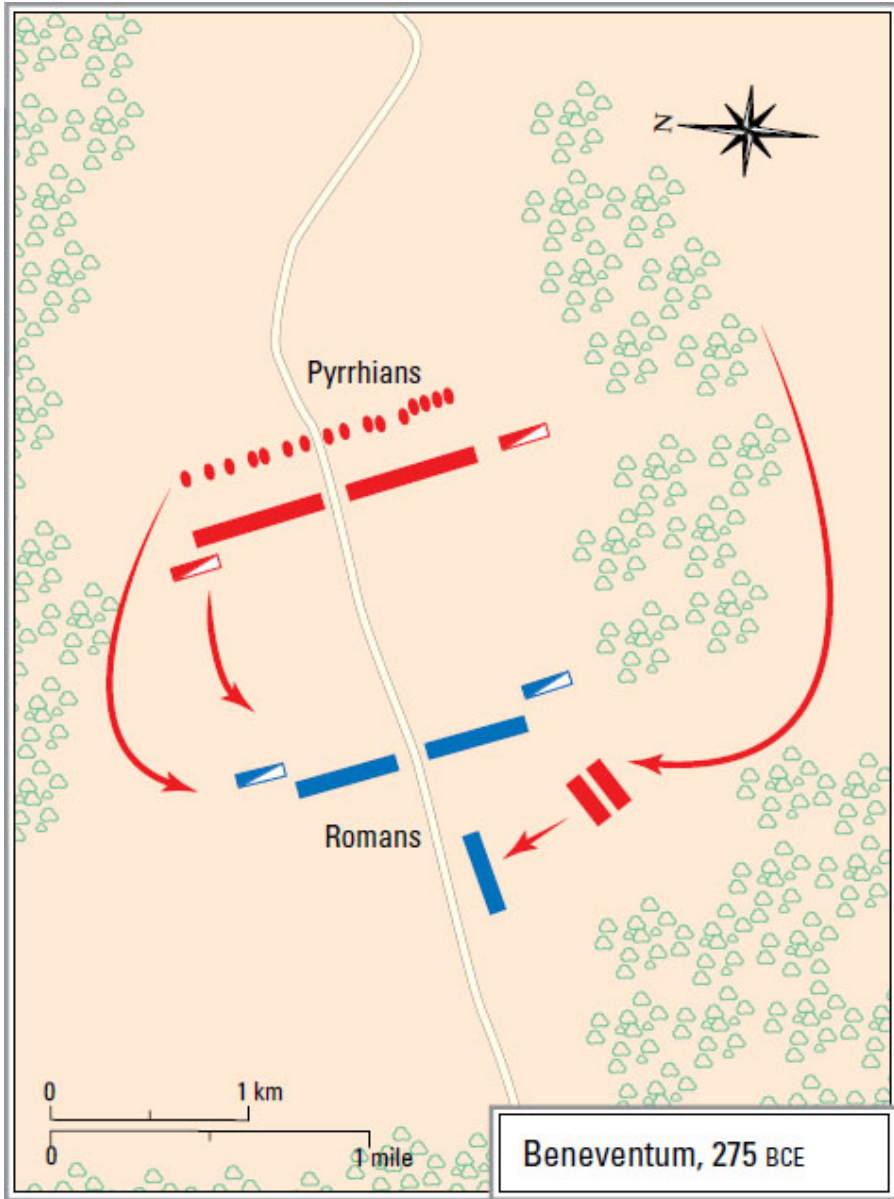
■ BENEVENTUM, 275 BCE

Taking advantage of defections among the Roman allies camped at Malaventum, King Pyrrhus launched a night assault on the Roman camp. This was thrown back in disorder. An initial Roman counter-attack was a failure, but a second attempt succeeded when their own war elephants stampeded through the Greek phalanx. King Pyrrhus called off his Italian campaign as a result of this defeat, and the Romans celebrated their victory by renaming the town Beneventum.

Syrian, Ptolemaic, Seleucid and Antigonid Wars 274– 100 BCE

■ INVASION OF MACEDONIA 274 BCE

Returning home from Italy with what remained of his armies, Pyrrhus found that conditions in neighbouring territories were ripe for a campaign of conquest. Hiring mercenaries, he launched a campaign to topple Antigonus of Macedonia.



■ CORINTH, 265 BCE

After two years of indecisive campaigning, the Greek coalition against Macedon had made some minor progress. The coalition suffered a severe defeat at Corinth, after which the war went very much against them.

■ MACEDONIA, 263 BCE

The Greek coalition against Macedonia collapsed with the fall of Athens to Macedonian troops and a peace treaty with Sparta. This cemented Macedonian control over Greece, though Egypt continued to interfere in Greek affairs.

■ INVASION OF SYRIA, 263 BCE

Entering into alliance with Seleucid Persia, Macedonian troops campaigned into Syria with the intention of driving Egyptian forces out of the Aegean region. Macedonian interest in the region waned as troubles grew on the northern borders.

■ Cos, 258 BCE

The Egyptian and Macedonian fleets met off Cos in a clash that decisively weakened Egyptian naval power. Details are sketchy, and the date has been disputed by several historians. An alternate date of 255 BCE has been suggested.

■ ANDROS, 245 BCE

Continued naval clashes between Egypt and Macedon led to a battle off Andros in 245 or 246 BCE. Egyptian power in the Cyclades island group was broken as a result of this defeat.

■ ANCYRA, 236 BCE

Having been installed as regent in Asia Minor, Antiochus Hierax rebelled against his brother Seleucus II of Persia. Seleucus was decisively defeated in a clash at Ancyra, making a hasty retreat across the River Taurus.

■ RAPHIA, 217 BCE

After a period of skirmishing, the Egyptian and Seleucid armies clashed, with the Egyptian flanks soon broken. The phalangites of both armies fought on for some time, with the Egyptians finally emerging victorious.

■ INVASION OF PARTHIA, 209 BCE

After the failure of a first expedition by Seleucus II to retake Parthia from the Parni, a second campaign under Antiochus III brought the region under Seleucid control as a vassal state.

■ ARIUS, 209 BCE

A force of Parthian cavalry attempted to halt the Seleucid advance at the river Arius. The Seleucid advance guard, composed mainly of elite troops, crossed the river at night and surprised the Parthians in their camp.

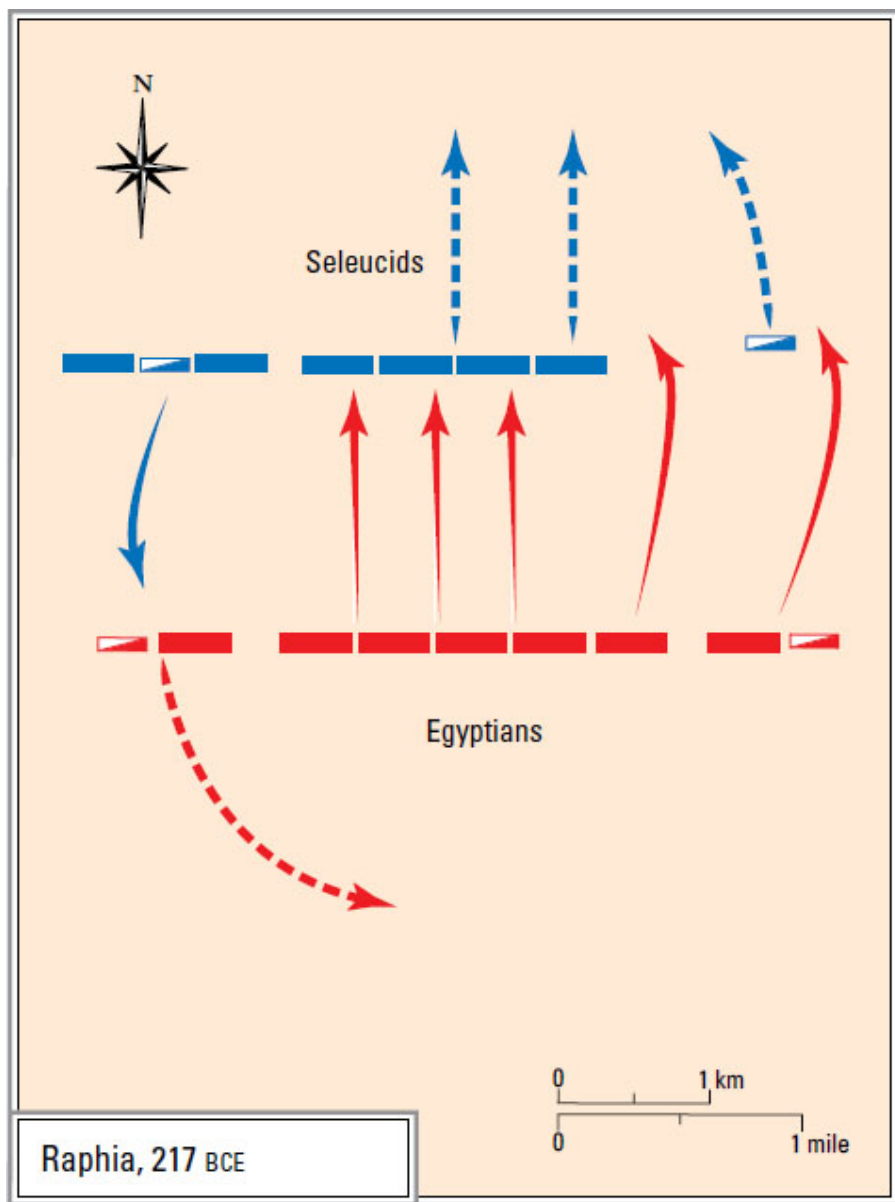
■ WAR OF ANTIOCHUS, III 208–06 BCE

After securing his northern frontier by reducing Parthia to a vassal state, Antiochus III marched eastward, forcing a peace settlement upon the rebellious province of Bactria. He then forayed into India where he was gifted with war elephants.

■ PANIUM, 198 BCE

Having seized Syria and Palestine, the Seleucids held it for a short time before they were driven out by additional forces from Egypt. Antiochus launched a new campaign to regain control of the province, culminating in the battle of Panium. The Seleucids' chief advantage

was their use of cataphract cavalry, which defeated and drove off the Egyptian cavalry on the flanks, then attacked the rear of the enemy's main infantry body.



■ EURYMEDON, 190 BCE

With the Seleucid intervention in Greece defeated by a Roman army at Thermopylae, Antiochus III was forced to abandon the campaign. Roman forces then went on the offensive, making control of the Aegean vital to both sides. The Seleucid fleet was commanded by the Carthaginian Hannibal, who was in exile at the Seleucid court.

Hannibal's fleet suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of a combined Roman–Rhodian force.

■ MYONESSUS, 190 BCE

Soon after the battle at Eurymedon, the Seleucid fleet was again defeated by a roughly equal-sized force of Roman and Rhodian ships. The superior experience of the Rhodians, and their use of fire-ships, were critical factors.

■ MAGNESIA, 190 BCE

With the Roman army on the offensive and keen to seek a decisive battle before winter set in, Antiochus set up a fortified camp and awaited their arrival. The Roman formation was conventional, in three lines with the Roman legions in the centre and allied forces holding the flanks. The Roman force had some war elephants but these were African beasts, outmatched by the Indian elephants of the Seleucid force in both numbers and physical power.

The Seleucid cavalry broke its opposite numbers on the Roman left flank, but pursued them rather than turning on the Roman centre. The Seleucid left flank was broken soon afterwards. In the centre, the two infantry forces were evenly matched until a force of elephants mixed into the Seleucid formation were routed and the pike-armed infantry became disordered. The Seleucid force was then driven from the field.

■ WADI HARAMIA, 167 BCE

Rising in revolt against Seleucid rule, Jewish forces under Judas Maccabeus established themselves in the mountains near Samaria, from where a force was sent against them. This was ambushed and overwhelmingly defeated.

■ BETH HORON, 166 BCE

A Seleucid force under the command of the general Seron was sent to locate and destroy the Maccabean rebels. This force was surprised at the Pass of Beth Horon and resoundingly defeated.

■ EMMAUS, 166 BCE

While Seleucid troops were in the field searching for his camp, Judas Maccabeus led an audacious attack against the Seleucids' base at Emmaus. His force then harassed the Seleucids during their subsequent retreat.

■ BETH ZUR, 164 BCE

Facing a Seleucid army under Lysias, governor of Syria, the Maccabean forces resorted to guerrilla tactics to wear down the enemy. Once the Seleucids were weakened, they were attacked and defeated at Beth Zur.

■ BETH ZACHARIAH, 162 BCE

After capturing and ritually cleansing the temple at Jerusalem, the Maccabees were faced with a new army under Lysias. The Jews

attempted to fight a set-piece field battle and were defeated by the better-equipped Seleucids.

■ ADASA, 161 BCE

The newly appointed governor of Judah, Nicanor, led a renewed attempt to crush the Maccabean revolt. Encountering the Jews at Adasa, near Beth-Horon, the Seleucids attacked but were defeated. This bought the revolt a brief respite.

■ ELASA, 160 BCE

Facing a vastly larger Seleucid force, Judas Maccabeus launched an attack against the bodyguard of their commander, routing it. His force was then overwhelmed by the remainder of the Seleucid army, and Judas was killed.

■ ANTIOCH, 145 BCE

The diminished Seleucid kingdom in Syria was attacked by forces backed by the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt. The Seleucids were defeated, though Pharaoh Ptolemy VI was killed in the fighting.

■ ECBATANA, 129 BCE

Antiochus VII led a campaign into Parthia to revive the fortunes of the declining Seleucid Empire. His force was overwhelmingly defeated at Ecbatana, bringing Seleucid ambitions in Parthia to an end.

Punic Wars 264–146 BCE

First Punic War 264–241 BCE

■ MESSINA, 264 BCE

In the hope of avoiding conquest by Syracuse, the city of Messina asked for aid from both Carthage and Rome. The result was a siege by Carthage, which was broken by the arrival of a Roman army.

■ AGRIGENTUM, 261 BCE

In order to prevent Carthage from using Agrigentum as a base of operations on Sicily, a Roman army was sent to capture it. This required a lengthy siege, allowing the Carthaginians to launch a relief expedition. This force established itself across the Roman supply line, effectively besieging the besiegers. After a long period of skirmishing the Romans were able to inflict a decisive defeat on their opponents, before finally forcing Agrigentum to surrender.

■ LIPARAEAN ISLANDS, 257 BCE

Attempting to take advantage of an offer by the city of Lipara to join their side, the Romans sent a small fleet there. It was ambushed by a far more experienced force and utterly defeated.

■ MYLAE, 260 BCE

War with Carthage forced Rome to confront its enemy at sea, and early encounters with the more experienced Carthaginian fleet did not go well. As a partial counter, Roman ships were fitted with a boarding ramp known as a *corvus*. This was intended to play to Roman strengths by allowing their legionaries to act as marine infantry.

The Roman and Carthaginian fleets met in the Tyrrhenian sea off the north coast of Sicily, near Mylae. The Carthaginians were eager to fight and expectant of victory, but the Roman tactic of using the *corvus* to force boarding actions came as a surprise and many ships were captured.



Although the Carthaginians tried quickly to adapt their tactics, the Romans had gained a decisive advantage, forcing their opponents to retreat with heavy losses. Rather than seek a further naval action the Roman force then landed troops in Sicily.

■ SULCI, 258 BCE

Sea power was essential to the control of Sicily, and naval skirmishing was common throughout the First Punic War. The Romans gained naval experience in these clashes and won a small victory off Sardinia in 258 BCE.

■ TYNDARIS, 257 BCE

Roman naval forces, observing the Carthaginian naval base at Tyndaris, became aware of a hostile fleet which appeared to be in a vulnerable disordered state. The Roman fleet attacked, but itself became disordered with the leading ships too far ahead of the main body. These ships were roughly handled by the Carthaginians, who were then driven off with heavy losses by the arrival of the main Roman fleet.

■ CAPE ECNOMUS, 256 BCE

A large Carthaginian fleet, attempting to prevent an invasion of Africa, attacked the Roman transport fleet. Roman naval tactics had improved sufficiently that the attack was driven off with heavy losses, despite initial Carthaginian successes.

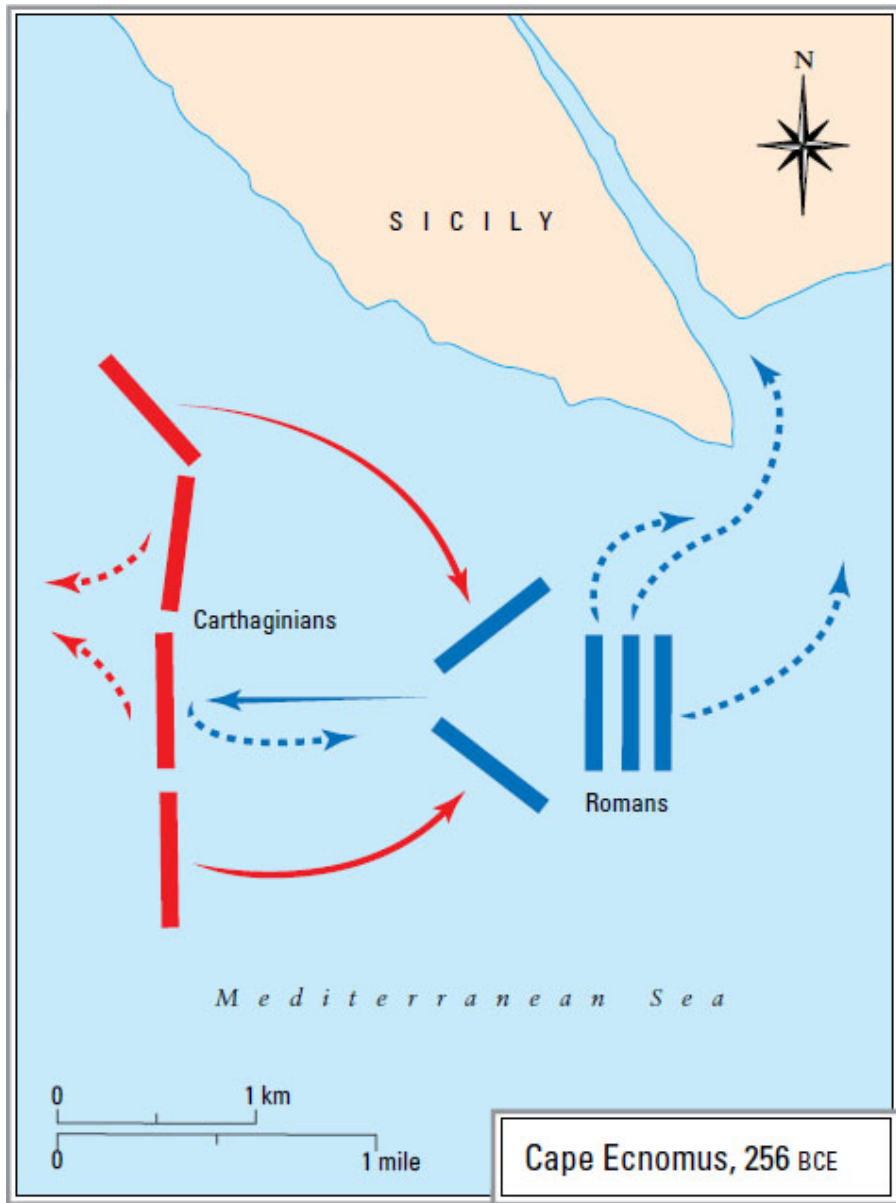
■ ADYS, 255 BCE

Attempting to oppose the Roman invasion of North Africa, a somewhat disorganized force under Hamilcar was resoundingly defeated near Adys. Carthage sued for peace, but ultimately rejected the offered terms as they were exceedingly harsh.

■ TUNIS (TUNES), 255 BCE

The Roman army, advancing on Carthage, made camp at Tunis where it was attacked by a hurriedly assembled Carthaginian army under the mercenary general Xanthippus. This force was a mix of militia, mercenaries, war elephants and elite cavalry.

The Roman legions struggled to resist the attack of the war elephants. Those that were able to engage the Carthaginian infantry at all did so in a piecemeal fashion and were driven off, although some Roman troops did manage to defeat their opposite numbers. These were able to fight their way clear of the disaster that followed and were able to reach the coast.



The Carthaginian cavalry hugely outnumbered their Roman opponents and soon routed them, after which they fell on the flanks and rear of the disordered legions. The Roman force was quickly overwhelmed, ending any chance of defeating Carthage in Africa.

■ LILYBAEUM, 251 BCE

After a series of setbacks, including the loss of a large fleet to storms, Rome returned to a strategy of wearing down Carthaginian strength. A naval raid on Lilybaeum, carried out by the newly rebuilt fleet, was beaten off.

■ PANORMUS, 251 BCE

After a long period of skirmishing on Sicily, a Carthaginian army under Hasdrubal launched an attack on a Roman force in the vicinity of Panormus. The Romans initially responded by retiring into the city, which permitted Hasdrubal to operate freely. His force foraged and ravaged the surrounding region before finally marching on the city itself.

The advance was led by war elephants, which came under attack from javelin men concealed outside the city and on top of the walls. Many wounded beasts ran amok, disordering the main Carthaginian body. This facilitated an assault by the main Roman force, which sallied out of the city to rout the enemy infantry.

Carthage abandoned any hope of gaining control of Sicily after this defeat, though skirmishing continued for some time. Hasdrubal was recalled to Carthage and executed, while the elephants captured by the Romans met the same fate at a public spectacle in Rome.

■ DREPANUM (TRAPANI), 249 BCE

The Roman siege of Lilybaeum was repeatedly broken by naval forces based in Drepanum, which outmanoeuvred the Roman fleet to carry supplies into the besieged city. This was not only a setback in the siege operations, but also an affront to the prestige of Rome. As a result, it was decided to remove the Carthaginians from Drepanum.

The plan was for a surprise attack, but the Roman fleet became disordered, giving the Carthaginians a chance to launch their ships. While the Romans were forming up their vessels, omens were sought. They were not good; the sacred chickens, whose feeding provided the omens, would not eat anything. The Roman commander, Publius Claudius Pulcher, threw them overboard and launched his attack anyway.

Outmanoeuvred by the Carthaginians, the Roman fleet was caught between the coast of Sicily and the Carthaginian ships. The two forces were roughly equal in size but the advantages of position and superior seamanship were with the Carthaginians. The Roman force was quickly driven onto the defensive and, unable to manoeuvre freely, was largely destroyed.

Some ships did manage to fight their way clear of the melee and flee, including the flagship. Publius Claudius Pulcher was recalled to Rome where he was charged with sacrilege for his actions towards the sacred chickens. The battle was followed by a further disaster, in which the remainder of the Roman fleet suffered huge losses in a storm.

Rome did not challenge Carthage at sea for some years thereafter, though the land campaign continued. Supplies and reinforcements were run across the Straits of Messina, preventing Carthage from using

this opportunity to rebuild their strength on the island.

■ AEGATES ISLANDS, 241 BCE

A Carthaginian fleet sent to relieve the blockaded city of Lilybaeum was intercepted off the Aegates Islands. The inexperienced Carthaginian fleet was outmanoeuvred by the Romans and driven off, ultimately resulting in the fall of Lilybaeum.

Mercenary War c.240 BCE

■ BAGRADAS RIVER, 239 BCE

Marching to retake Utica from rebellious mercenaries, the Carthaginian army encountered a large but disorganized hostile force. Carthaginian commander Hannibal was able to outmanoeuvre his opponents and break through to the city.

■ THE SAW, 239 BCE

Hannibal was able to drive the main mercenary army into a canyon known as 'The Saw' where he laid siege. Eventually the starving mercenaries were forced to launch a hopeless attack on the Carthaginian positions.

■ UTICA, 238 BCE

Most cities that had rebelled during the Mercenary War surrendered, but Utica remained defiant and was besieged. Despite counter-attacks, the siege was eventually successful and the fall of the city brought the Mercenary War to a close.

Second Punic War 219–202 BC

■ SAGUNTUM, 219–218 BCE

Carthaginian ambitions in Iberia required that the heavily fortified city of Saguntum be captured. This required a lengthy siege, giving time for assistance to arrive from Rome, with whom Saguntum had a treaty. However, the Romans were occupied with dealing with a revolt in Illyria and did not send assistance in time.

Over the course of several months, Carthaginian forces under the command of Hannibal Barca gradually reduced the defences and finally broke into the city. This gave Hannibal a secure port through which he could supply his army for a campaign to expand Carthaginian power in Iberia.

By taking Saguntum, Hannibal brought Carthage into direct conflict with Rome. Previous treaties limited Carthaginian expansion in the region, and attacking a Roman ally was a provocation that could not be ignored. Despite attempts at a diplomatic resolution, the Second Punic War was thus begun.

■ CISSA, 218 BCE

Roman forces arrived in Iberia after Hannibal had left, and were engaged in a set-piece battle by an outnumbered Carthaginian army. The Romans emerged victorious, in this, their first battle in Iberia, and succeeded in capturing the enemy camp.

■ RHONE CROSSING, 218 BCE

With hostile Gauls holding the Rhone crossings against him, Hannibal sent a force on a wide flank march across the river. With the Gauls' attention fixed on Hannibal's main force, they were struck in the rear and routed.

■ TICINUS RIVER, 218 BCE

Since a maritime strategy had failed in the First Punic War, Hannibal's strategy was to march overland against Rome, through southern Gaul and northern Italy. He hoped to recruit the tribes of that region, many of whom had no love for Rome, to his cause.

Rome used the time that Hannibal spent on the march to raise and train an expanded army and navy. Some of these forces were sent to Sicily to guard against renewed Carthaginian attempts to control the island. Attempts to rally the Gallic tribes against Hannibal failed, largely due to the fact that Rome had recently allowed Saguntum to be taken without sending the aid required by treaty.

Some tribes did oppose the Carthaginian march, but by and large the Roman response was ineffective in preventing Hannibal's army from entering Italy. Once on Italian soil, he forced an alliance on the tribes of the region, many of whom were in a state of revolt against Rome.

The sudden appearance of Hannibal's army in Italy caused the Romans hurriedly to send an army against him, resulting in an encounter between the reconnaissance forces of both sides. The Roman force included some light foot troops; the Carthaginian detachment was entirely of cavalry.

The Carthaginian cavalry scattered the Roman light infantry, causing them to flee and disorder the cavalry behind. The ensuing melee was won by the Carthaginians, who came close to capturing the consul Publius Cornelius Scipio the Elder. He was rescued by a force of cavalry commanded by his son, the future Scipio Africanus.

The Roman reconnaissance was in some ways a success despite this defeat; having learned of the disposition of Hannibal's army the Roman force retired to await reinforcements.

■ TREBIA RIVER, 218 BCE

Hannibal's defeat of a Roman army at the Ticinus river drew additional forces to his banner, from tribes who wished to be free of the control of Rome. The Romans, for their part, were reinforced by the arrival of an army under Tiberius Sempronius Longus. As Scipio

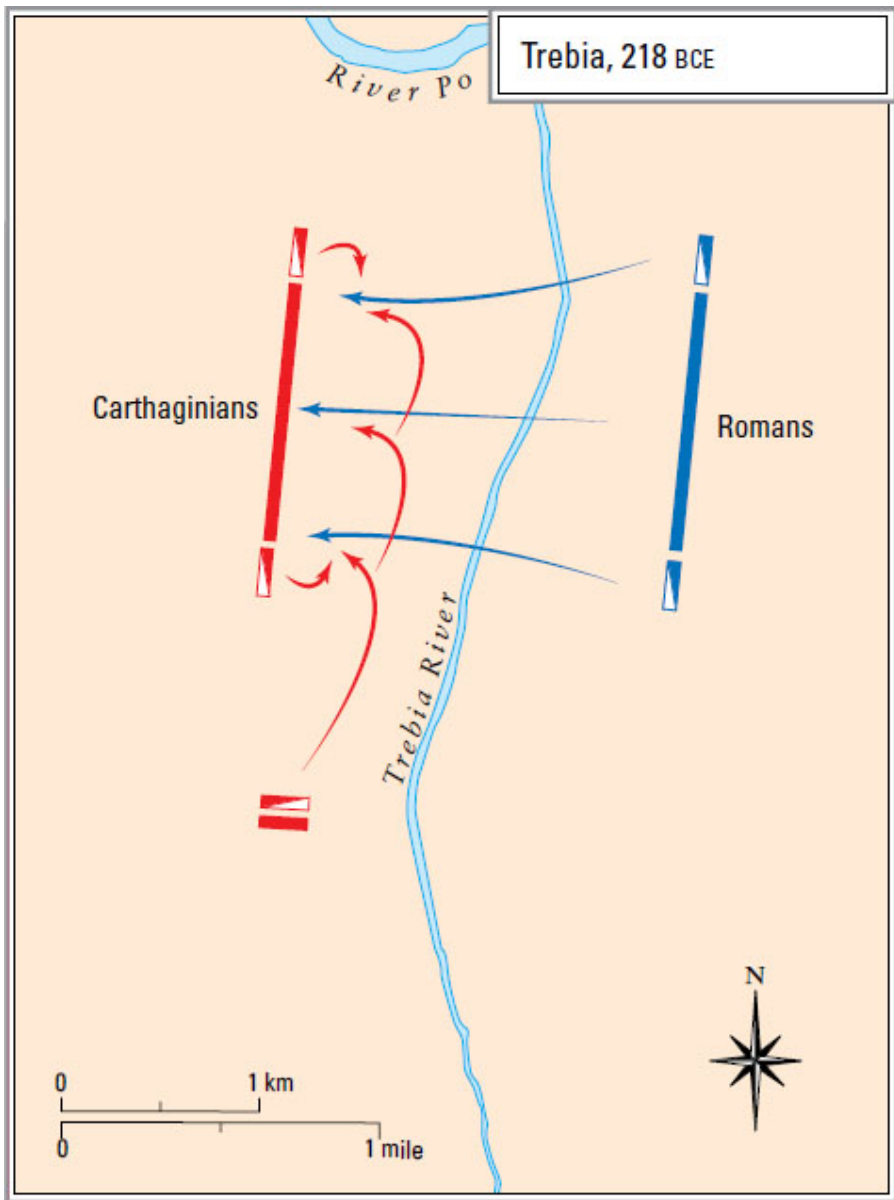
was wounded, Sempronius took command of the overall force.

A detachment from Sempronius' army was able to drive a Carthaginian foraging expedition back to their camp, which convinced Sempronius that he had the measure of this opponent. Hannibal, however, realized that Sempronius was predisposed to be rash and laid a trap. To draw his enemies into it, he sent Numidian cavalry to make a dawn attack on the Roman camp. Sempronius took the bait and pursued the Numidians across the River Trebia, where Hannibal's main force awaited him. The Roman troops were forced to wade through cold water up to their chests. They emerged tired and chilled, and in no condition to fight.

Rather than engage the Romans when they were in the river, Hannibal chose to allow them to gain the bank, slightly reducing the odds of victory in return for greater results if the Romans were broken with their backs to the water. The Roman light infantry were first to engage but were ineffective because of the cold. They were soon driven off.

The heavily outnumbered Roman cavalry were defeated on the flanks, but despite being chilled and disordered by their river crossing the infantry were able to advance some distance from the riverbank. At this point, Carthaginian forces concealed by the river launched an attack from ambush. They were joined by cavalry from the flanks.

The rear elements of the Roman formation were first to break, with many men trying to cross the river to safety while under attack. The lead elements, composed of better-trained troops, remained effective and formed a square formation to defend themselves, as supporting units scattered around them. This force was able to continue to advance, while Hannibal's troops concentrated on the rout by the river.



The broken Roman and allied units were massacred as they tried to reform or escape across the river, and allied Gallic infantry who had not been able to join the square formation also suffered very heavy casualties. Among the troops by the river, the battle had become a massacre, and Sempronius wisely chose not to try to fight his way back to help comrades who were already comprehensively defeated. Instead, Sempronius' force beat off all attacks on it and was able to retire to Placentia.

Losses on the Roman side were enormous – about half the force committed, or around 15,000-20,000 men. This left Rome without an

effective field army to oppose Hannibal's advance. However, the cold weather made further Carthaginian operations difficult for a time, other than some skirmishing.

Hannibal's losses at the Trebia were small, and fell mainly on allied Gallic tribesmen rather than native Carthaginians. The majority of the remaining elephants were killed in the battle, or died during the cold weather that followed, but Hannibal's strategic position was strong and he had reason to hope that he might be able to trigger a revolt among Rome's allies and subjects. To that end he released many of the prisoners he had taken, allowing them to return home in the hope of building goodwill in their cities.

■ LILYBAEUM, 218 BCE

Mischance and bad weather caused a group of Carthaginian ships to be captured by the navy of Syracuse, whose ruler passed on information gained from their crews. Thus forewarned of a raid against the Sicilian coast, the Roman fleet was able to position itself to intercept.

Although numerically inferior, the Roman force was operating closer to its home ports. This permitted the ships to be fully manned with legionaries acting as marines, whereas the Carthaginians were forced to carry supplies in the place of additional fighting men.

Both sides played to their strengths, with the Carthaginians attempting to ram and the Romans preferring to grapple and board. Roman seamanship had improved since the First Punic War, and they were able to bring their superior manpower to bear in a series of boarding actions. Several Carthaginian ships were taken and the rest driven off.

■ LAKE TRASIMENE, 217 BCE

Faced with a successful Carthaginian invasion now firmly established on Italian soil, the Roman position was perilous. Hannibal's army began marching south, bypassing the Roman force under Gaius Flaminius. Flaminius was forced to hurry south, trying to get between Hannibal and Rome. This gave Hannibal the chance to defeat his force before it could be reinforced by a consular army under Servilius.

Hannibal decided to draw the Romans into an ambush by ravaging the countryside and offering provocations. At the same time, he tried to lure Flaminius into complacency by deception. A detachment of troops lit fires in the distance, making Flaminius think he was safe. The Romans thus took to the road without proper scouts, hoping to catch up with Hannibal's army by a rapid march.

Hannibal positioned part of his force in a blocking position on the Malpasso road where it ran close to Lake Trasimene. The remainder of the troops were concealed on the hills that loomed above the road.

With no scouts out, the lead elements of the Roman army had no warning of the enemy to their front.

As the head of their column came under attack and struggled to deploy into battle formation, the Romans were also assailed from the flank positions, initially by light missile troops stationed on the high ground. Another force of Hannibal's infantry attacked the rear of the Roman column, cutting off the line of retreat. Essentially, the Romans were now trapped. The main Carthaginian force then charged down the slope to take the disorganized Romans in the flank.

The Roman force was broken into sections. The vanguard managed to fight its way out of the trap, but the rear segment was driven into the lake. The central part of the column defended itself for a time with complete desperation, but was eventually overwhelmed.

■ EBRO RIVER, 217 BCE

A Carthaginian fleet arrived at the mouth of the Ebro and sent personnel ashore to forage. It was surprised there by a Roman force. Many Carthaginian ships were beached when it became apparent that the battle was lost.

■ AGER FALERNUS, 217 BCE

Hannibal's army became trapped in the valley of Ager Falernus, with Roman garrisons on the exit passes. Drawing one out by deception, Hannibal inflicted a sharp defeat and broke out of the trap.



■ GERONIUM, 217 BCE

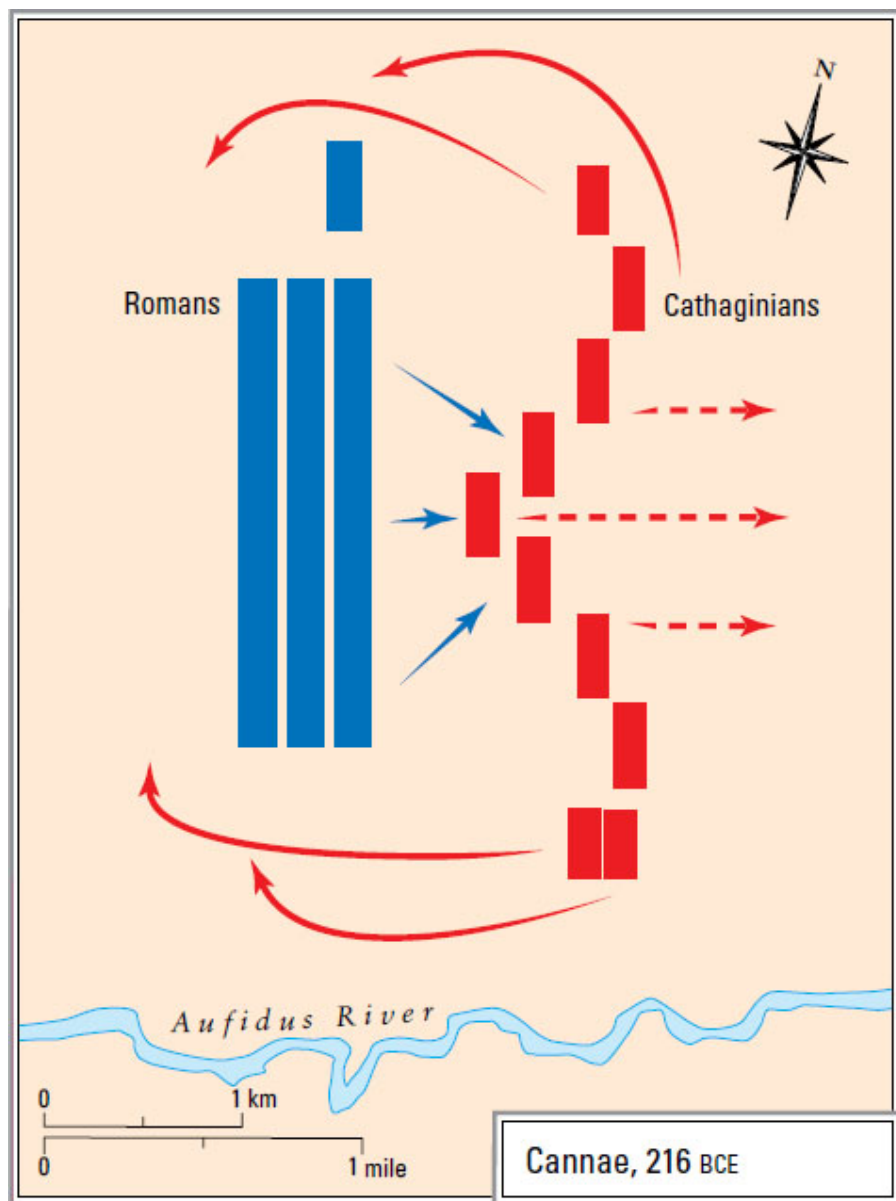
Wearied of the cautious strategy of the dictator Fabius Maximus, the Roman senate gave his second in command, Marcus Minucius Rufus, half the army. Hannibal was able to draw Minucius into a trap. Fabius, known for his cautious strategy of avoiding decisive battle, intervened to restore the situation. As Minucius' troops rallied and the whole Roman army prepared for a continued battle, Hannibal chose to break off and withdraw.

■ CANNAE, 216 BCE

Fabius Maximus' strategy of avoiding defeat became increasingly

unpopular as Hannibal's Carthaginian army ravaged the countryside. Many Roman politicians had holdings in the affected regions. They were suffering financial losses and were not willing to wait for Hannibal's army to be worn down by campaigning in the field.

In 216, under pressure to achieve a decisive result, consuls Paullus and Varro were elected to command the Roman army. The arrangement was that each consul would be in overall command on alternate days. At the head of a body of reinforcements, they joined the army in close proximity to that of Hannibal.



Skirmishing had been ongoing for some time when Paullus and Varro arrived, and the cautious Paullus was content with small victories that would slowly bleed the Carthaginian army's strength. Not so Varro, who believed that he could defeat Hannibal in a decisive battle where others had failed so completely.

Aware of Varro's hot-headedness, Hannibal laid a trap for the Romans near the village of Cannae, offering battle on a somewhat restricted frontage. Woods and a river limited the Romans' freedom to manoeuvre, and the Carthaginians were deployed on higher ground than their Roman opponents. This positioning somewhat offset the numerical advantage of the Roman army.

The two Roman consuls held differing opinions about whether or not to attack. Paullus chose caution, but on Varro's day in command he resolved to fight. The Roman army advanced in its customary formation, with the heavy infantry in the centre and the flanks held by cavalry. The force was screened by skirmishers.

Hannibal's force also deployed behind a screen of skirmishers, with a line of mercenary infantry behind them to absorb the initial Roman assault. On the ends of this line were the Carthaginian infantry. Gallic and Spanish cavalry were deployed on the left flank, with Numidian horsemen on the right.

Hannibal's deployment of his infantry was designed to spare his own Carthaginian troops from the initial Roman charge. It also made economic sense, as dead mercenaries need not be paid. The line was bowed out towards the Roman force.

The battle began with a general clash between the skirmishers on both sides. Ideally, their role was to harass the main body of the enemy, inflicting casualties and disrupting its formation, but as usual the result was that the skirmishers fought their own inconclusive battle among themselves and then fell back. Hannibal's left-flank cavalry was more successful, however, driving off its opposite numbers. The Roman cavalry were outmatched in terms of numbers, equipment and training, and were soon driven from the field. The Gallic and Spanish cavalry, some of whom had fought dismounted, remained under the control of their commanders and rallied, ready to launch another attack. Meanwhile, the Roman infantry drove forward confidently. The mercenary troops facing it were driven back, with the line now bowing back instead of forward. However, this forced the Roman infantry ever closer together as they penetrated the enemy formation, and Hannibal's Carthaginian infantry began to lap around the flanks.

As the Roman infantry advance ground to a halt, the Roman left-flank cavalry were attacked from the right by the Numidians. The Gallic/Spanish cavalry force fell on their rear and broke them, with

the Numidians pursuing them from the field. The Roman infantry, now tightly packed together and surrounded on three sides, were attacked by cavalry in the rear and massacred. Those that escaped were vigorously pursued, with Paullus killed in a rearguard action, one of more than 50,000 Romans who died that day.

■ NOLA, 216–214 BCE

After the disaster at Cannae, Rome recalled the veteran commander Marcus Claudius Marcellus to its defence. He was given the remnant of the army shattered at Cannae to augment his own troops. Sending a detachment to protect Rome itself, Marcellus took his force into Campania where he was able to prevent an attempt by Hannibal to capture the city. This action did much to dispel the atmosphere of despondency in Rome; it established that Hannibal could in fact be defeated.

Hannibal attempted to capture the city again in 215 and a third time in 214 BCE, but was prevented from doing so each time. Whereas Rome could replace its losses, Hannibal's army was on foreign soil and supporting itself by foraging. Each failure to win a decisive battle was a step closer to defeat.

■ DERTOSA, 215 BCE

The Carthaginian commander in Iberia, Hasdrubal, hoped to draw in the Roman army and perform a double envelopment of the sort that was so successful at Cannae. However, the Roman cavalry wings were not broken and the legionaries in the centre were able to break the Carthaginian line. As a result of this defeat, forces intended to assist Hannibal in Italia had to be redirected to Iberia in order to shore up a worsening position there.

■ CORNUS, 215 BCE

A revolt against Roman rule in Sardinia prompted Carthage to send assistance, which was delayed by storms. After arriving, the Carthaginian forces became involved in a lengthy standoff with Roman troops, who had been reinforced. Both sides sought a decisive battle, which was won by the Romans. Some surviving Carthaginian troops were taken off by their fleet, which was then intercepted and defeated by a Roman naval force.

■ BENEVENTUM, 214 BCE

A Roman army, comprised mainly of slaves who had been offered their freedom in return for fighting, intercepted a Carthaginian detachment near Beneventum. The battle was notable for its ferocity rather than any tactical brilliance.

■ SYRACUSE, 214–212 BCE

Syracuse, long friendly to Rome, sided with Carthage in 214 BCE. A Roman army under Marcus Claudius Marcellus was sent to deal with

the situation. Unable to take the city by storm, the Romans were forced to resort to a long siege in which the defenders benefited from the assistance of the Greek scientist Archimedes. The outer city was taken by a surprise assault, but it was several months more before the citadel fell.

■ TARENTUM, 212 BCE

A surprise night attack caught the Roman garrison unprepared and allowed Hannibal to take control of the city. However, some of the garrison managed to reach the citadel, which they held until the end of the war.

■ CAPUA, 212 BCE

Hannibal's successes, notably at Cannae, caused a number of cities to defect to his cause. Among them was Capua, and in 212 BCE a Roman army laid siege to the city. Hannibal sent a force to break the siege, which at first conducted raids against the Romans. When these raids failed to achieve a result, Hannibal offered battle. The ensuing action was bloody but inconclusive, leaving the strategic situation more or less unchanged.



■ BENEVENTUM, 212 BCE

Although forced to retire from Capua, Roman forces under Quintus Fulvius Flaccus were able to defeat a Carthaginian army near Beneventum and capture their camp before returning to besiege Capua once more.

■ SILARUS, 212 BCE

A Roman force under the command of the inexperienced Marcus Centenius Penula was ambushed by Hannibal's army, which for once enjoyed superiority of numbers. The Roman force was all but annihilated.

■ HERDONEA, 212 BCE

Hannibal lured the complacent Roman commander Gnaeus Fulvius Flaccus into a trap. With the Roman line of retreat blocked and attacked by ambush from the flanks as well as the front, Roman resistance collapsed.

■ UPPER BAETIS, 211 BCE

Reinforced with additional troops, Hasdrubal Barca went on the offensive in Iberia. In a series of connected actions he defeated the Roman army under the Scipio brothers, killing both. The surviving Roman force was pushed northwards.

■ HERDONEA, 210 BCE

Hannibal marched against a Roman force besieging the city of Herdonia, which had rebelled in his favour. The Roman force was surrounded and was all but annihilated in what would be Hannibal's last great victory.

■ NUMISTRO, 210 BCE

Although he had broken the siege of Herdonea, Hannibal did not attempt to hold it but retired in the face of a second Roman army under Marcus Claudius Marcellus. This resulted in an inconclusive clash at Numistro.

■ CARTAGENA, 209 BCE

Roman forces first implemented a sea and land blockade of the city, which was accessible by land only over a narrow isthmus. After containing a counter-attack by the Carthaginian defenders an initial, and unsuccessful, assault was launched. A second attempt was then made using much the same tactics. The Roman fleet attacked the south side of the city while a land assault was made from the north, dividing the defenders.

■ NEW CARTHAGE, 209 BCE

First isolating the city by establishing himself on the isthmus connecting it to the mainland, Scipio Africanus assaulted overland from the north while his fleet attacked from the south. New Carthage was taken after repeated assaults.

■ TARENTUM, 209 BCE

A Roman army under Quintus Fabius Maximus defeated a similarly sized Carthaginian force to retake Tarentum, which had previously thrown in its lot with Carthage. Hannibal gradually began to lose his hold on southern Italia.

■ ASCULUM, 208 BCE

Although now heavily outnumbered, and with his Italian allies turning against him, Hannibal continued to present a severe threat to Rome. Consul Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the 'Sword of Rome', was killed in a skirmish with the Carthaginian forces.

■ **BAECULA, 208 BCE**

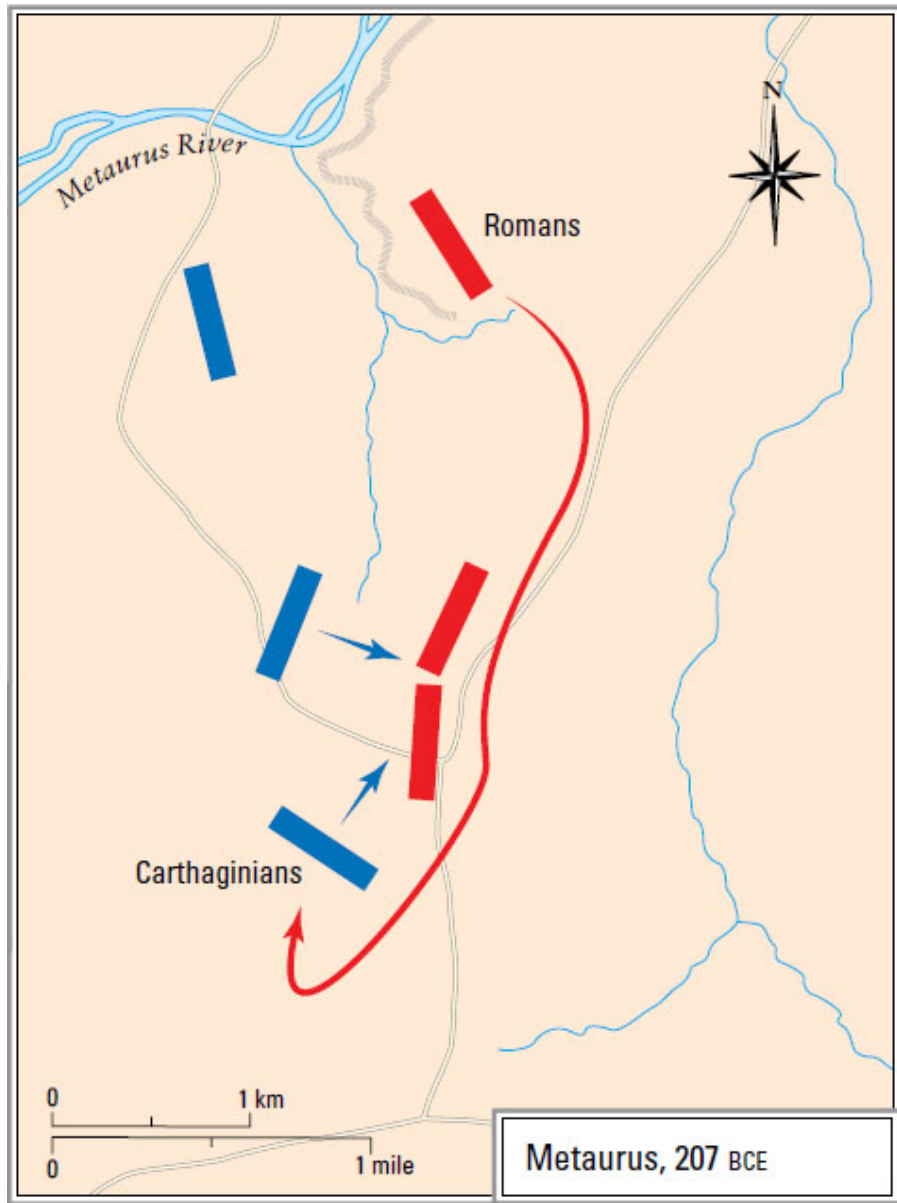
Scipio Africanus deviated from standard Roman doctrine to outmanoeuvre a Carthaginian army deployed in a strong position. The Carthaginians were forced to sacrifice their light troops in order to preserve the core of their army.

■ **GRUMENTUM, 207 BCE**

Apparently offering a traditional set-piece battle, the Romans were able to conceal a detachment to the enemy rear. As the fighting intensified, this force assaulted the Carthaginian rear and provoked a disordered retreat.

■ **METAURUS, 207 BCE**

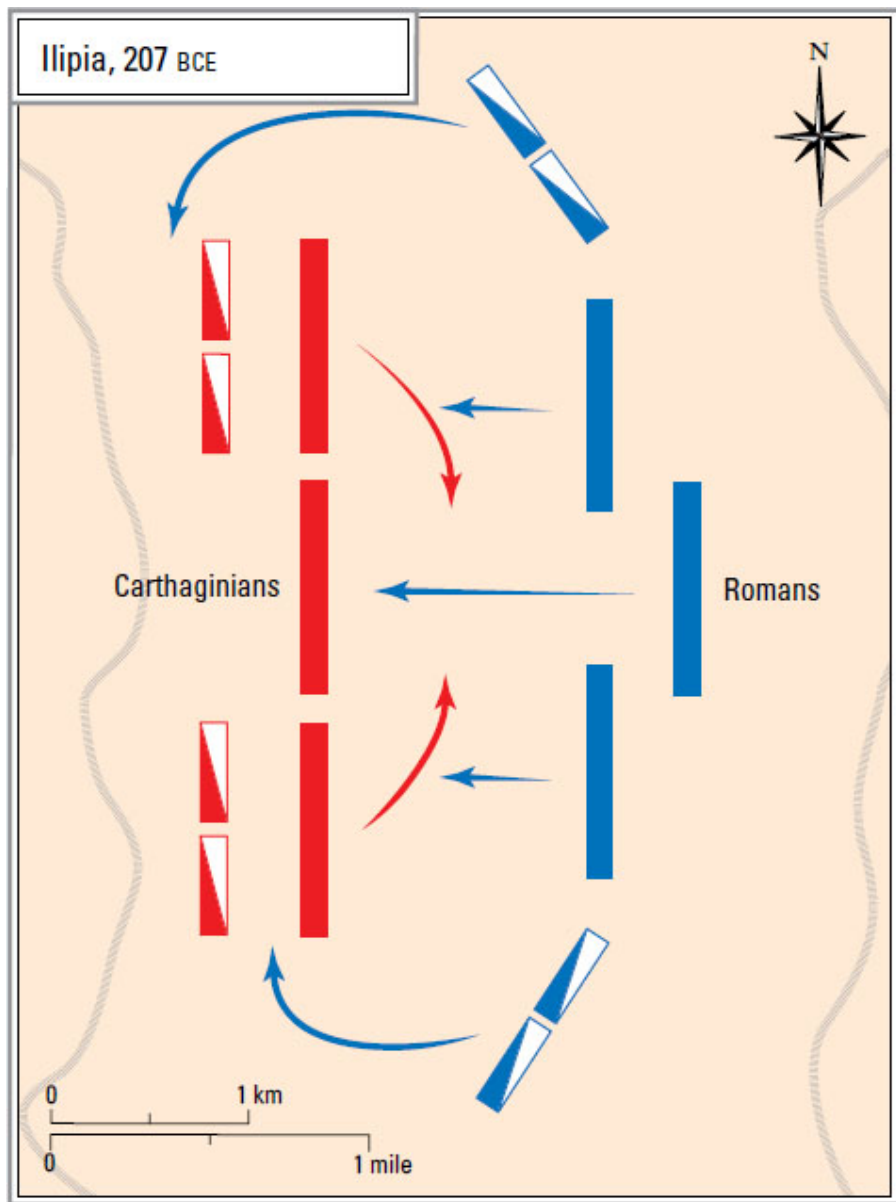
Attempting to reinforce Hannibal's army in Italy, his brother Hasdrubal marched from Iberia through southern Gaul. He was intercepted in northern Italy near the River Metaurus by a Roman army under Livius and Nero. The forces engaged were roughly equal, at around 50,000 on each side.



Roman generals had begun emulating Hannibal's tactics rather than simply launching the traditional frontal assault, and their fortunes improved correspondingly. At the Metaurus, the Roman commanders used dead ground to cover a flank march. This flanking attack caused the Carthaginian right wing to collapse. In the centre, the line was badly disordered by their own panicked war elephants running amok, and began to dissolve into rout upon seeing the Romans overrunning the right. Hasdrubal decided that all was lost and sought an honourable death by charging into the Roman line.

■ ILIPA (SILIPA), 207 BCE

Using a refused centre and reinforced wings, Scipio Africanus caught the Carthaginian army in a double envelopment, breaking the flanks and then falling on the centre. Only a sudden rainstorm prevented the total destruction of the Carthaginian army.



■ CROTONE, 204 BCE

In 204 BCE a Roman force approaching the port of Crotona was defeated in an unplanned encounter battle, escaping disaster only by taking refuge in its camp. Inconclusive fighting in the area continued into the next year.

■ UTICA, 203 BCE

Scipio Africanus' army, forced to lift its siege of Utica, took refuge in a fortified camp. The two armies facing Scipio did likewise, creating a standoff. This was broken by a surprise Roman attack combined with the burning of the Carthaginian camps.

■ BAGBRADES, 203 BCE

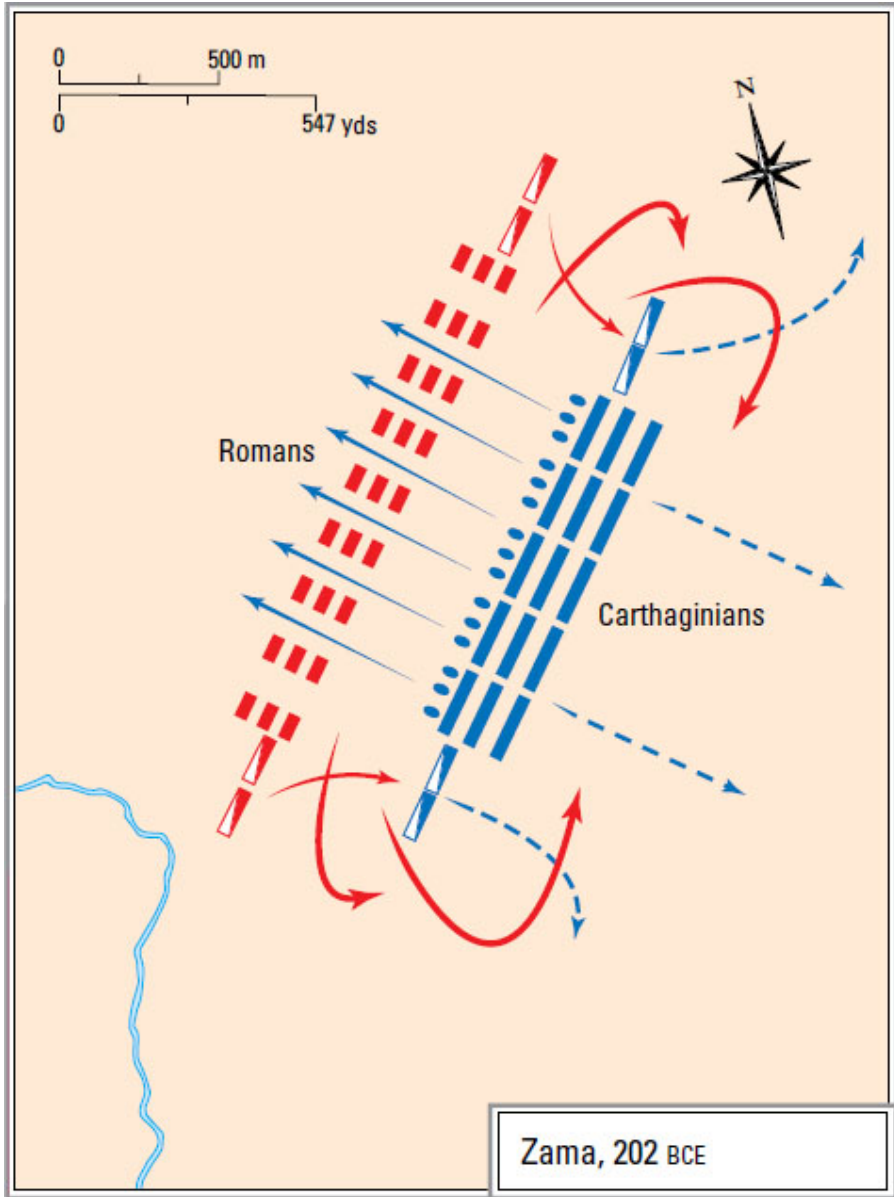
A vigorous Roman charge quickly broke most of the Carthaginian army, leaving only its Spanish mercenary contingent on the field. This force was flanked by the second and third Roman lines, with few mercenaries escaping.

■ CIRTA, 203 BCE

The Numidian king Syphax, ally of Carthage, assembled a new force to oppose Scipio after the defeat at Bagbrades. He attempted to copy Roman tactics, but his newly raised force was not up to the task before it. After a hard fight, Syphax' army began to collapse and he was captured while trying to rally his troops. Carthage responded to the defeat at Cirta by recalling Hannibal from Italy.

■ PO VALLEY RAID, 203 BCE

Operating in north-western Italy from 205 BCE, the Carthaginian commander Mago succeeded in triggering insurrections among the tribes of the region. These added to his strength and alarmed Roman leaders, who sent an army to deal with him in 203 BCE. The battle did not go well for Rome at first, but the intervention of the second-line troops, as well as a serious wound suffered by Mago, caused the Carthaginian force to collapse in rout.



■ ZAMA, 202 BCE

Recalled from Italy to defend Carthage itself from Rome, Hannibal Barca brought with him around 18,000 veteran troops. To augment these forces, Carthage raised around 30,000 more. However, most were little more than militia or were foreign mercenaries. The Carthaginian cavalry, once a formidable elite force, had suffered severe losses and was greatly diminished.

The opposing armies deployed with infantry in the centre and cavalry on the flanks, with the Carthaginians deploying war elephants in advance of their infantry. The Roman cavalry saw off its opponents

after a brisk fight, while the elephant attack was dealt with by herding the beasts into gaps between the Roman formations. These gaps contained light infantry who killed those elephants that did not simply pass through.

The Roman cavalry pursued its opponents off the field, rather than rallying to attack the enemy infantry in the rear. This left the course of the battle down to the respective infantry forces, both of which were deployed in three lines.

The Carthaginian front line, composed largely of mercenaries, initially held the Roman advance. Superior training and discipline eventually allowed the Romans to push the mercenaries back, and the Carthaginian second line was easily overcome. The third line was composed of Hannibal's veterans, and these were a match for the Romans.

Both commanders ordered reserves onto the flanks, extending their lines in the hope of outflanking their opponents. The infantry fight went on for some time before the returning Roman cavalry launched an attack into the Carthaginian rear. Hannibal and what remained of his army retired into Carthage, which surrendered soon afterward. This brought about the end of the Second Punic War with a treaty sufficiently harsh as to ensure that the power of Carthage was broken forever.

Third Punic War 149–146 BCE

■ **CARTHAGE, 149–146 BCE**

Although Carthage was no longer a threat to Rome, many Roman leaders argued for its total destruction. Carthage attempted to appease Rome, but was forced into refusing when Roman demands became unacceptable. Roman attempts to storm the city failed, and a formal siege was implemented. The Carthaginians made a spirited active defence, raiding the Roman camps and even their fleet, but after a long siege the city was finally assaulted.

Rome vs Gauls/Celts 250–133 BCE

■ FAESULAE, 225 BCE

Faesulae was an Etrurian city in northern Italy, along Hannibal's invasion route, near which his allied Gauls invading across the Alps separately ambushed a smaller Roman army, inflicting 6000 casualties before the Romans withdrew.

■ TELAMON, 225 BCE

The consul Gaius Atilius Regulus, landing from Sardinia, intercepted the further advance of the Gauls in Telamon as they moved southward into Italy, while the army of the other consul, Lucius Aemilius Papus, pursued them from the north. Atilius' cavalry fought a sharp action with the Gauls' horse, in which Atilius fell. Papus noted the position of the action and hastened his own advance, his cavalry joining the earlier melee and prevailing. By the end of the cavalry action the infantry on both sides were engaged, the Gauls in a double formation. The heavy javelins, armour, and shields of the legionaries proved superior to the shock caused by the terrifying onset of the traditionally naked Gallic infantry, the result being the collapse of the invasion with 40,000 Gauls slain and their king Concolitanus captured.

■ CLASTIDIUM, 222 BCE

This Roman outpost in Cisalpine Gaul was relieved when the consul Marcus Claudius Marcellus led a cavalry charge against the besieging Insubrian Gauls. By slaying the chieftain Viridomarus, Marcellus won Rome's highest military honour, the Spoila Opima.

■ MUTINA, 218 BCE

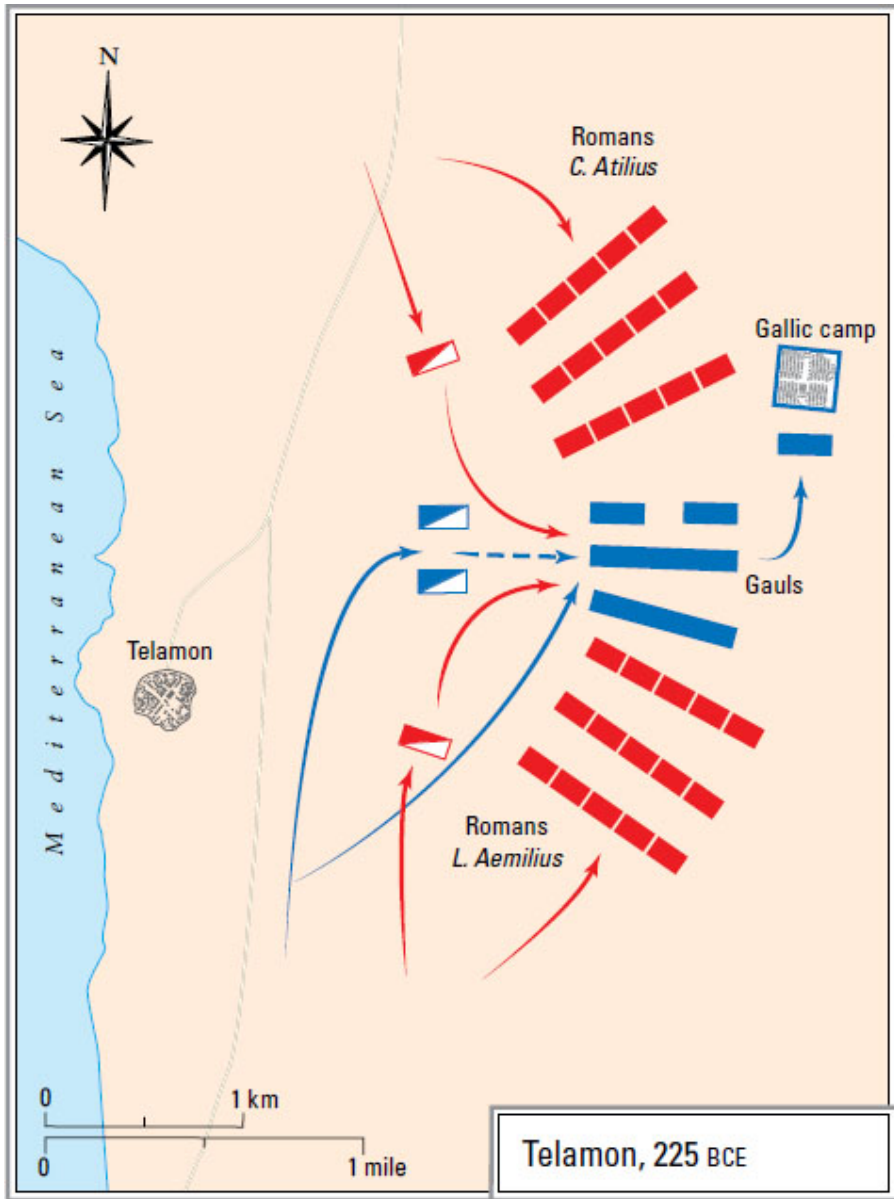
The fortified Roman outpost in Cisalpine Gaul was attacked by the Boian Gauls, who were in revolt in anticipation of Hannibal's invasion of Italy. A relieving Roman army retreated after an ambush to nearby Tanetum. Mutina apparently survived the siege.

■ CREMONA, 200 BCE

The Gauls launched a dawn attack around the Roman fort at Cremona upon a relieving Roman army under Lucius Furius. Furius shifted reserves behind his outnumbered army to win decisively.

■ MOUNT OLYMPUS, 189 BCE

A Gallic mountain tribe, the Tolostobogii, moved into Roman-occupied Greece along the range that included this peak. The Gauls camped above collapsed under sustained missile attacks by Roman and allied forces under the consul Manlius.



■ SIEGE OF NUMANTIA, 134–133 BCE

This powerful Celtic city had resisted six Roman efforts to reduce it before the final epic siege by Scipio Aemilianus and his Mauritanian allies. Aemilianus pragmatically resorted to circumvallation, surrounding the town and its 4000 inhabitants with a wall extending 9km supported by 13 legionary camps. After resisting for eight months, the bulk of the Numantians chose to fire their city and commit suicide rather than surrender to the Romans.

Cleomenean War 227–222 BCE

■ ELIS, 227 BCE

This strategic city in the northern Peloponnese was besieged by Aratus, commanding the Achaean League's forces. Cleomenes, one of the Spartan kings, surprised and drove off the Achaeans with a force of 5000 Spartans and loyal mercenaries.

■ LADOCEIA, 227 BCE

Cleomenes, withdrawing before an Achaean League force relieving Megalopolis, won an unexpected victory in pitched battle. Aratus had countermanded an engagement, but a subordinate crossing a ravine after a skirmish suffered defeat in detail.

■ DYME, 226 BCE

City of the Achaean League, before which Hyperbatus, having replaced Aratus as the Achaean League's commander, engaged Cleomenes and the Spartans. Cleomenes' challenge drew out the Achaean phalanx, which the Spartans destroyed, inflicting severe losses.

■ LECHAEUM, 226 BCE

Outlying port-suburb of Corinth, beyond which Cleomenes had driven the Achaean League, having taken or received in alliance nearly all the cities of the Peloponnese. The Macedonians' intervention under Antigonos Doson forced Cleomenes' retreat southward.

■ TEGEA, 223 BCE

Town in Arcadia on the Spartan frontier, garrisoned and defended by Cleomenes against the advancing Macedonian army under Antigonos Doson. Cleomenes returned suddenly to Sparta, and the Macedonians quickly took the town in his absence.

■ SELLASIA, 222 BCE

Valley battle in which Cleomenes fought the combined forces of Antigonos Doson of Macedon and Philopoemen and the Achaean League. The Achaeans dislodged the Spartan centre; Cleomenes expended his own troops against the Macedonian phalanx.

Chinese Chu-Han War 207–202 BCE

■ JULU, 207 BCE

The Qin Dynasty succeeded in unifying China but did not outlast its first emperor for long. Within months of his death in 210 BCE, unrest had become open revolt. Qin forces attempted to suppress the insurrection, with mixed success.

In 207 BCE, a Qin army laid siege to the city of Julu, which belonged to the state of Zhao. This prompted the state of Chu to send a relief force to the city. The Chu strategy was at first a cautious one, waiting for the Zhao defenders of Julu to wear down the Qin forces.

With the defenders of Julu beginning to starve, the Chu were forced to attack. After crossing the Yellow River, the army was ordered to destroy its boats and most of the available supplies in a deliberate ploy to make the Chu soldiers desperate. With no means to retreat and short of food, the Chu had to attack and win in order to feed themselves.

The Chu won several victories and succeeded in breaking the supply line between the force besieging Julu and the larger Qin army. The Chu commanders had hoped that success would inspire other rebel states to send assistance, but none was sent. With no alternative, the Chu army was forced to fight on alone and eventually succeeded in pushing the Qin away from Julu. The Qin army took up a new position at Jiyuan, but its retreat from Julu finally prompted the other rebel states to send assistance to the Chu. The enlarged Chu army then advanced against the Qin force, hoping for a decisive battle. Instead, the Qin army surrendered; its commander had become aware of an internal plot against him and sought sanctuary with his former enemies.

■ JINGXING, 205 BCE

Han forces drew their Zhao opponents onto a prepared position and fought a defensive battle while a diversionary force attacked the Zhao camp. Thinking they were under attack from the rear, the Zhao forces collapsed.

■ WEI RIVER, 203 BCE

The outnumbered Han army provoked its opponents into charging across the Wei river, which had been dammed with sandbags. They then smashed the dam, drowning many of their enemies and trapping a segment of the enemy army.

■ GAIXIA, 202 BCE

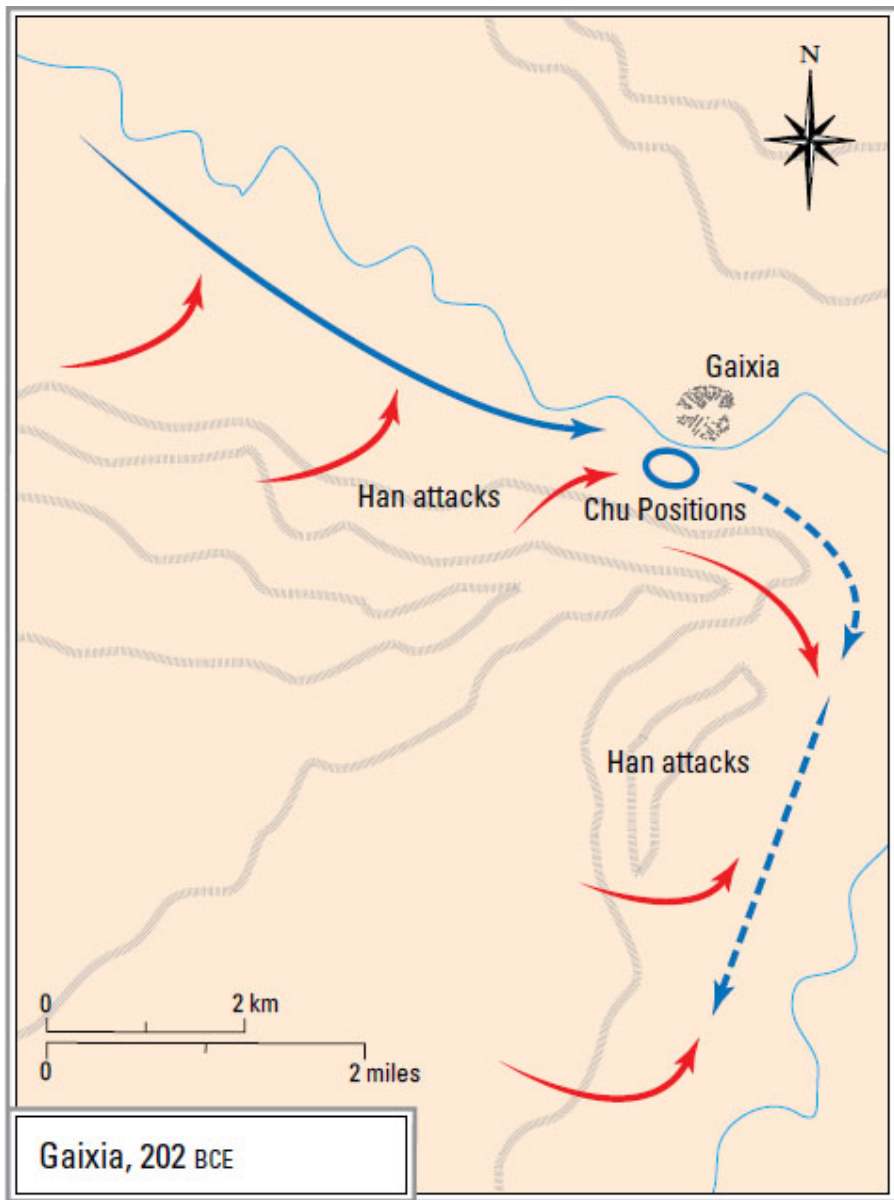
After the collapse of the Qin dynasty, Chu and Han fought over rulership of all China. Internal politics hamstrung the efforts of the

Han, with rival generals and political leaders vying for position and precedence once victory was achieved. Thus, although the Han were successful in some engagements, they were not able to achieve lasting dominance and the Chu retained control of large parts of the country.

The Chu benefited from the strong leadership of Xiang Yu, who was a great fighting general but a poor logistician. The Han strategy of harassing Chu supply lines exacerbated this problem, preventing Xiang Yu from achieving decisive results. Having finally settled some of their internal differences, the Han decided upon a new strategy in 202 BCE.

Offering the Chu a peace settlement, the Han feigned a retreat, prompting the Chu army to retire also. The Chu had been under-supplied for some time, so their troops were tired and hungry as they began their march. They were also jubilant at returning home after a long war, and were unprepared for the sudden attack launched by the Han. The Chu counter-attack was defeated by a Han retreat, leading the disorganized Chu into a series of ambushes. Xiang Yu then decided to continue with the retirement. His intent was to reach a friendly stronghold where his army could resupply and reorganize in safety. The Han set about channelling the Chu retreat by setting up blocking positions and ambushes on their route, herding the Chu into the region of Gaixia.

Correctly deducing that his force was being directed into a trap, Xiang Yu attempted to avoid the canyons around Gaixia. Learning that his wife had been captured and was being held there, he sent the bulk of his force by a different route and led a rescue mission with part of his army. Although they knew they would be ambushed, the Chu had no choice but to follow their general into the canyons. There, they were attacked in a series of hit-and-run raids designed to lead any pursuit into further ambushes. The rescue force remained a dangerous opponent, however.



Instead it was penned in the canyons for some months, while the Han used psychological gambits to reduce Chu morale. Among these was the tactic of forcing captured Chu soldiers to sing songs about their homes within earshot of the trapped army, making the Chu think that their nation had been conquered. This resulted in mass desertion.

Eventually, less than a thousand Chu remained with their general. The force was far more mobile than the host that had entered the canyons, making a breakout possible. Despite heavy losses, a small force did succeed in getting out of the trap. They were chased down by Han cavalry.

Xiang Yu committed suicide. His loss, as much as that of his army, crippled the Chu war effort. No other leaders of his calibre were available, and the war thereafter became a string of defeats for the Chu. The Han were able to achieve dominance over the regions originally unified by the Qin, and became the ruling dynasty of China.

Han Dynasty Wars 200 BCE–220 CE

■ BAIDENG, 200 BCE

Han forces operating against the Xiongnu (Hsiungnu), a confederation of nomadic tribal peoples to the north, became surrounded at Baideng. It is unclear exactly what circumstances led to this event; the Han may have been responding to a raid or launching a campaign of conquest. In either case, the Han were defeated and implemented a diplomatic rather than military strategy to ensure stable relations with their tribal neighbours.

■ MAYI, 133 BCE

After many years of border raids, the Han attempted to draw Xiongnu forces into an ambush at the city of Mayi. The Xiongnu detected the trap in time and withdrew before the infantry-based forces of the Han could catch them.

■ KANSU/HE SI, 121 BCE

Han forces under General Huo Qubing launched a series of raids that forced the Xiongnu to seek a peace settlement with the Han. This gave the Han control over the Hexi Corridor, an important trade route.

■ MOBEI, 119 BCE

Initially the armies of the Han, based as they were on infantry and chariots, could only achieve success against the Xiongnu by luring them into an ambush. Increased use of cavalry gave the Han the option of launching offensive operations against the Xiongnu. A series of attacks drove the Xiongnu northwards, and in 119 BCE the Han followed up with a renewed offensive.

The eastern part of the operation was a complete success, pursuing the Xiongnu as far as Lake Baikal. The western segment was more difficult, running into a counter-attack by Xiongnu cavalry. The Han took up a defensive stance, using their chariots to create field fortifications. After several hours of indecisive fighting, the Han took advantage of a sandstorm to launch a flanking cavalry attack which broke the Xiongnu. This defeat forced the Xiongnu further north and secured the Han frontier.

■ LOULAN, 108 BCE

After securing their northern flank, the Han turned their attention to Central Asia. A small expeditionary force was able to overrun the kingdom of Loulan without difficulty, bringing it under Han rule.

■ TIEN SHAN, 99 BCE

Li Ling, a Han general, led a small force on a deep raid into Xiongnu territory, but was driven back by greatly superior numbers. The Han

made a fighting retreat but eventually became surrounded, after which Li Ling surrendered.

■ **JUSHI, 67 BCE**

Although their power was greatly diminished, the Xiongnu intervened in a Han attempt to control Jushi. Their attempt to relieve the siege of Jiaohe, capital of Jushi, was driven off by the Han army.

■ **KANG-CHU, 36 BCE**

Fearing an invasion by the Xiongnu leader Zhizhi Chanyu, Han governor Gan Yanshou launched a pre-emptive campaign without the emperor's permission. The Han force beat off an attack by Kangju cavalry en route.



■ TALAS, 36 BCE

The Xiongnu prince Zhizhi Chanyu fortified himself near Talas. Despite cavalry attacks by Kangju allies, he was unable to defeat the attack of a large Han army. Zhizhi's force may have included some Romans captured at Carrhae.

■ KUNYANG 23 CE

Rebellions against the Xin Dynasty permitted the Han Dynasty to be re-established under Liu Xuan. He provided a figurehead for the rebels and, conversely, a chance to suppress the revolts by killing him. Han forces were disjointed, operating under a number of leaders who did

not always agree on what was to be done. A portion of the Han army, forced to retreat by the arrival of a greatly superior Xin army, took refuge in Kunyang.

As the Xin advanced on Kunyang, some rebel leaders wanted to disperse their forces and avoid a battle, but Liu Xuan persuaded them to fortify the city and hold it while other Han troops assembled to attack the Xin. While the rebels gathered their army, the defenders of the city were forced to endure repeated assaults with siege towers as well as attempts to undermine the walls. The city was still under Han control when the relief force arrived.

Despite setbacks against the city's defenders, the Xin were overconfident. When Liu Xuan led a small force against them, the Xin responded with only part of their army. The remainder was ordered to hold its siege positions unless directly ordered to intervene. The Xin commander was killed in the fighting with Liu Xuan's force, ensuring that the order to join the battle was never given.

Even when a diversionary force assaulted the Xin camp, there was little response from the main army, though the distraction was sufficient to allow the city garrison to sally out. This sudden attack caused a panic in the Xin army, which collapsed in rout. This defeat triggered further uprisings in support of the Han.

■ SOGDIANA, 36 CE

Continued Han intervention in Central Asia led to an expedition across the Jaxartes river and a battle with the people of the region, who were known as Sogdians. Among the Sogdian forces were, reportedly, a number of Roman soldiers. According to what records remain, the crossbows of the Han infantry were highly effective in penetrating the armour of the Romans, contributing to their defeat. If Roman troops were present, it is likely that they were military slaves, probably captured during Crassus' disastrous campaign into Parthia. These troops, perhaps captured at the battle of Carrhae, might have been offered their lives in return for military service in a remote region, a system often used by the Romans themselves. Accounts exist of Han encounters elsewhere with troops equipped in the Roman manner.

■ CHENGDU, 36 CE

Han forces advanced on Chengdu despite delays caused by the assassination of two generals. An assault failed but the Han used a ruse to trick the defenders into launching a counter-attack, which was decisively defeated.

■ YIWULU, 73 CE

A Han expedition against the Xiongnu proved largely inconclusive, but part of the Han force was able to drive the Xiongnu out of Yiwulu. This allowed the creation of a supply base in the region.

■ IKH BAYAN, 89 CE

A further expedition against the Xiongnu forced them to negotiate for peace, after which internal conflicts rendered them all but powerless. Within a few years the Xiongnu ceased to be a threat to the Han state.

■ YELLOW TURBAN REBELLION, 189 CE

A combination of weak central government and several crises prompted a widespread uprising. After taking steps to secure the capital, the imperial army gradually wore down the rebel forces, though the conflict flared up again for several years.

■ XINGYANG, 190 CE

Alleging that the chancellor, Dong Zhuo, was intending to seize power by controlling the child emperor, a coalition of regional leaders launched a campaign to remove him from his position. Dong Zhuo ordered the capital, Luoyang, to be abandoned and destroyed, moving the seat of government to the more defensible Chang'an. The capital was first thoroughly looted.

A coalition army advancing on Luoyang encountered Dong Zhuo's forces at Xingyang, where an intense but inconclusive battle resulted. The coalition force retreated to Suanzao towards nightfall, where it took up a defensive stance. Dong Zhuo's field commander declined to launch an attack and withdrew from the battlefield. After this setback, the coalition moved from a strategy of direct confrontation to one of blockade and harassment in the hope of wearing down their opponents.

■ YANGCHENG, 191 CE

The ruined remains of the imperial capital at Luoyang were abandoned by Dong Zhuo's forces and afterwards were captured by the coalition in a largely symbolic act. The coalition then began to break up; what had begun as a campaign against Dong Zhuo became a struggle between warlords for domination of China. This began with an attack on Yangchen by Yuan Shao and gradually expanded into a wider conflict.

■ JIEQIAO, 191 CE

What was primarily an infantry army under the warlord Yuan Shao encountered the more balanced force of Gongsun Zan. Zan's opening cavalry charge was routed by heavy crossbow fire and steady infantry, causing the rest of his army to collapse.

■ XIANGYANG, 191 CE

After defeating the forces of the warlord Liu Biao in the field, Yuan Shu's general, Sun Jian, besieged them in Xiangyang. A sortie under General Huang Zu was launched to break the siege, but was defeated and pursued away from the city. During the pursuit Sun Jian was killed and Liu Biao was able to claim victory. Yuan Shu's forces retired

from the region, leaving it under Liu Biao's control.

■ FENGQIU, 193 CE

Forces of the warlord Yuan Shu occupied Fengqiu, causing Cao Cao to attempt to dislodge them. Defeating Yuan Shu's field army, Cao Cao advanced on Fengqiu and laid siege, driving off what remained of Yuan Shu's force.

■ YAN PROVINCE, 194 CE

While the warlord Cao Cao was on campaign elsewhere, his home province of Yan rebelled against him. Cao Cao was forced to fight a long campaign, including a very lengthy siege of Yongqiu, to recapture it.

■ WANCHENG, 197 CE

The city of Wangcheng surrendered to Cao Cao, but its forces then launched a surprise attack on the fortified camp of Cao Cao's army. This assault was held at one entrance to the camp by Cao Cao's general, Dian Wei, and a handful of men, but Wangcheng troops were able to breach the other gates. Cao Cao himself fled the battle, in which his son was killed.

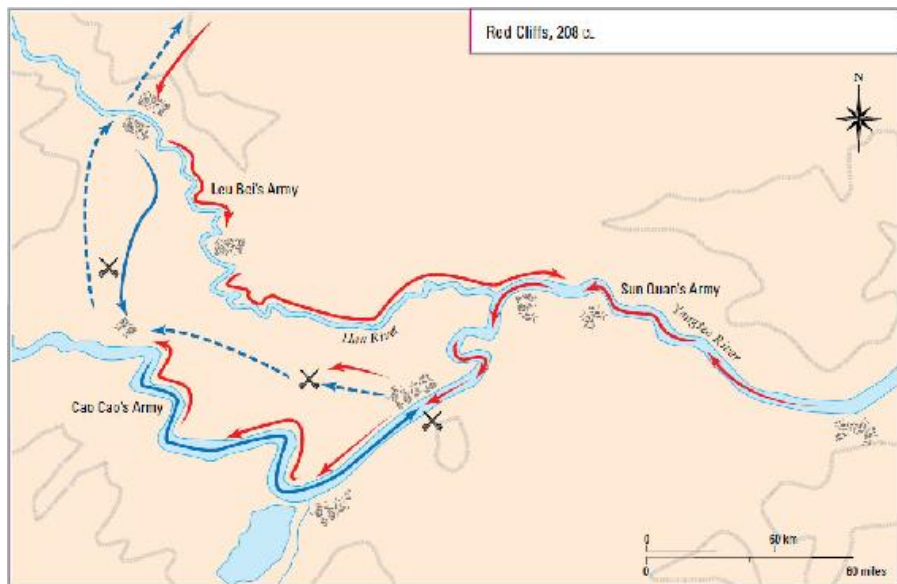
■ XIAPI, 198 CE

The warlord Cao Cao besieged the city of Xiapi amid complex and at times treacherous political manoeuvrings. A relief army and a sortie from the city were both beaten off. Eventually, hamstrung by internal politics, the defenders surrendered.

■ YIJING, 199 CE

After lengthy fighting, the warlord Yuan Shao gradually gained a dominant position in the northern provinces of China. His rival, Gongsun Zan, built a fortified city at Yijing for use as a supply base. While Gongsun Zan remained secure in his new fortress, his field armies were gradually defeated or surrendered as central command weakened.

This freed Yuan Shao to march on Yijing. His forces were unable to storm the city, but placed it under siege. A relief force was finally assembled, and a plan was developed to surprise the attackers. However, Yuan Shao's commanders became aware of the plan and laid an ambush. With the relief force defeated, Yuan Shao's army undermined part of the walls and gained entry to the city. Gongsun Zan committed suicide when defeat became inevitable.



■ GUANDU, 200 CE

After several months of stalemate, both the forces of Yuan Shao and Cao Cao were short of food. Cao Cao's forces were able to destroy the main enemy supply bases, forcing Yuan Shao to withdraw across the Yellow River.

■ BOWANG, 202 CE

A detached force of Cao Cao's army engaged troops loyal to Liu Bei, who retreated southwards. The pursuit ran into an ambush, but was saved from utter defeat by the timely arrival of reinforcements.

■ XIAKOU (JIANGXIA), 208 CE

Hoping to capture the city as a base of operations, the warlord Sun Quan advanced on Jiangxia. His progress was blocked by large warships at the mouth of the Miankou river, with land forces nearby. Sun Quan's warships were unable to break through, but an assault force overran the blocking ships despite stiff resistance. With the collapse of Jiangxia's naval defences, Sun Quan's forces were able to reach and assault the city.

■ CHANGBAN, 208 CE

Cao Cao's forces, pursuing those of Liu Bei, caught up with them at Changban. Liu Bei was able to escape due to a determined rearguard action, though a large portion of his army was captured.

■ RED CLIFFS, 208 CE

As the Han Dynasty came to an end, the warlords of various regions grew beyond the control of the Emperor and eventually began to openly fight over rulership of all China. The most powerful of them was Cao Cao, who controlled the North China Plain.

Cao Cao was sufficiently successful in pacifying his home region, so

much so that he was named imperial chancellor, possibly in an attempt to obtain his loyalty to the emperor or perhaps at his own demand. This position gave him control of the imperial government and legitimized his campaigns of conquest as an attempt to re-unify a divided China. Cao Cao then launched a campaign to gain control of the Yangtze river, which in turn would give him easy access to the southern regions. This would enable him to suppress the southern warlords and impose his dominance over a re-unified China, either in his own right or in the name of a figurehead emperor.

Cao Cao's forces were easily able to capture the city of Jiangxia and the nearby naval base of Jiangling. This gave Cao Cao control of that part of the Yangtze, as well as the naval forces necessary to exploit it. After the fall of Jiangxia, the warlord Liu Bei was forced to retreat and was heavily defeated at Changban, though he was able to escape with part of his army.

Unable to counter the greater strength of Cao Cao, Liu Bei made an alliance with his fellow warlord Sun Quan. The two set out to meet Cao Cao with a hastily assembled force of ships and marines which, although large, was still seriously outnumbered. Their main advantage was that Cao Cao was operating at the end of a long supply line. Furthermore, his troops were tired and possibly suffering from disease.

The allies sailed upriver to intercept Cao Cao at Red Cliffs where an indecisive skirmish took place. Cao Cao's advantage in numbers was offset by the weariness of his troops, resulting in a stalemate. The allies pulled back to reorganize and Cao Cao retreated to Wulin where he moored his fleet in a defensive position.

Cao Cao's forces were landsmen, unskilled at fighting aboard ships and, to take advantage of this, a squadron of large fireships was sent against Cao Cao's fleet. The northerners were unable to manoeuvre out of the way in time, and many of their vessels were set alight. The ensuing confusion and panic was exploited by the allies, who launched a successful assault on Cao Cao's fleet.

Cao Cao decided to fight on land rather than risk total defeat on the river, so his force disembarked and burned some of its remaining ships to prevent capture. A difficult retreat was then carried out towards Huarong. This took Cao Cao's army through swampy ground where it lost more of its strength to drowning, straggling, and to skirmishes with the pursuing allies. Disease also claimed many lives, and by the time the army had reached a suitable position to reorganize itself, it was exhausted and fatally weakened. Cao Cao had no choice but to retreat northward with his main force, leaving garrisons to hold strategic points.

■ YILING, 208 CE

As Cao Cao retreated, Sun Quan's general Zhou Yu advanced towards

Jiangling with the intention of recapturing it. To cover his flank he detached a force to Yiling, which was also garrisoned by Cao Cao. The governor of the city, who had been forced to serve Cao Cao, surrendered and offered his allegiance to Sun Quan.

Cao Cao's forces immediately launched an attack to capture Yiling. The heavily outnumbered defenders requested assistance from the main army, which was sent, despite the fact that this dangerously weakened the main force before Jiangling. In the meantime, Zhou Yu's forces engaged in deceptive operations and skirmishing to disguise their weakness. The unexpected arrival of reinforcements at Yiling enabled Sun Quan's army to inflict a serious defeat on Cao Cao's expedition and capture large numbers of horses.

■ JIANGLING, 209 CE

Cao Cao's army in Jiangling was extremely strong but was consequently difficult to supply. After months of skirmishing it became too costly for Cao Cao to maintain his garrison at Jiangling, so it was withdrawn.

■ TONG PASS, 211 CE

Cao Cao's army met a large force from Guanxi at Tong Pass. After a lengthy period of stalemate, Cao Cao launched an outflanking manoeuvre and, capitalizing on internal disputes among his enemies, finally routed them in open battle.

■ JICHENG, 213 CE

Under siege by the forces of Ma Chao, the governor of Jicheng sent an official out to make contact with any relief force. He was captured and executed after which the governor surrendered.

■ LICHENG, 213 CE

Rebelling against the rule of Ma Chao, forces under Yang Fu made a fighting retreat until reinforcements from other rebellious factions and from the warlord Cao Cao arrived. Ma Chao was forced to withdraw.

■ YI PROVINCE, 214 CE

After the defeat of Cao Cao at Red Cliffs, Liu Bei decided to take control of Yi province by capturing Chengdu. This required a lengthy siege at Luo. Chengdu itself surrendered as Liu Bei's army approached.

■ BAXI, 215 CE

Cao Cao's forces, advancing on Baxi, were ambushed by troops loyal to Liu Bei in mountainous terrain. With their column under attack from different directions, Cao Cao's forces were defeated with only a small proportion escaping.

■ YANGPING, 215 CE

Zhang Lu's forces fortified Yangping Pass against Cao Cao, and held out for some time. Feigning retreat, Cao Cao launched a surprise attack that overcame the defenders and opened the way for a

continued advance.

■ HEFEI, C. 217 CE

Hefei was a fortress city built to defend the state of Wei and was attacked repeatedly. Sun Quan launched a campaign to take it while its owner, Cao Cao, was elsewhere on campaign. The outnumbered defenders launched a pre-emptive attack on Sun Quan's army, which severely disrupted their plans. After a short siege Sun Quan was forced to withdraw. Pursuit by troops from Hefei resulted in a costly rearguard action.

■ RUXUKOU, 218 CE

Cao Cao led a counter-offensive against Sun Quan in 217 CE, leading to a naval campaign against Ruxukou which was severely disrupted by a storm. After failing to break through Sun Quan's defences, Cao Cao retired.

■ MOUNT DINGJUN, 219 CE

Liu Bei led an offensive against Cao Cao's forces in Hanzhong province, which was stalled for months at Yingpin Pass. A night attack eventually broke through Cao Cao's defences and pushed his army out of the pass.

■ HAN RIVER, 219 CE

Liu Bei launched a raid to destroy grain supplies held by Cao Cao's field army. The raiding force became cut off, prompting a rescue mission. After a confused series of engagements Liu Bei's forces regained their camp with Cao Cao in pursuit. Liu Bei tried to lure Cao Cao into an ambush at the camp, which partially succeeded. Cao Cao was forced to retire, and his supplies of grain were destroyed.

■ FANCHENG, 219 CE

Taking advantage of setbacks suffered by Cao Cao, Guan Yu, a general serving Liu Bei, launched a campaign against his territory. After a series of engagements, Cao Cao's forces were caught in a flood and suffered massive casualties, forcing the remnant to stand on the defensive behind the walls of Fangcheng. Exploiting a dispute between Liu Bei and his ally Sun Quan, Cao Cao launched a counter-offensive that forced Guan Yu to retreat.

■ JING PROVINCE, 219 CE

Sun Quan attacked Liu Bei's holdings in Jing province and overran them while Guan Yu was still fighting at Fangcheng. Guan Yu's attempt to retake the province failed, leaving Jing in the hands of Sun Quan.

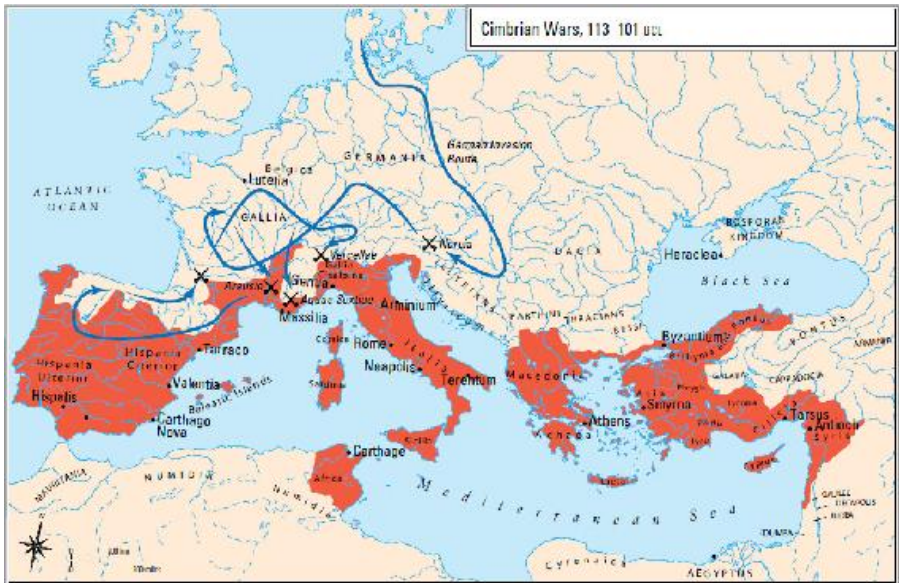
Cimbrian War 113–101 BCE

■ NOREIA, 112 BCE

The migrating Cimbri and Teutones threatened Roman allies near Noreia. A Roman army responded by attempting an ambush. Their plan was discovered and the Roman force was heavily defeated. The tribes then resumed their march.

■ ARAUSIO, 105 BCE

Attempts to intercept the migratory Cimbri and Teutones highlighted deficiencies in the Roman military system that had been apparent for some time. The commanders of the two armies sent against them failed to cooperate, reducing their effectiveness considerably. In addition, the Roman army was in a period of transition from a militia force to one staffed by professionals.



The burden of military service traditionally fell on the landed classes, whose absence from their businesses and estates had a serious impact on their finances and upon the Roman economy. Poorer citizens were recruited only in times of dire need. However, the system was evolving, with legions becoming permanently established and gaining regimental traditions.

The old system of recruits being assigned according to their age and experience to the *Hastati*, *Principes* and *Triarii* within a legion was also gradually supplanted. The *Triarii* were now equipped equivalently to the *Hastati* and *Principes*, with pila and swords instead of their traditional spears.

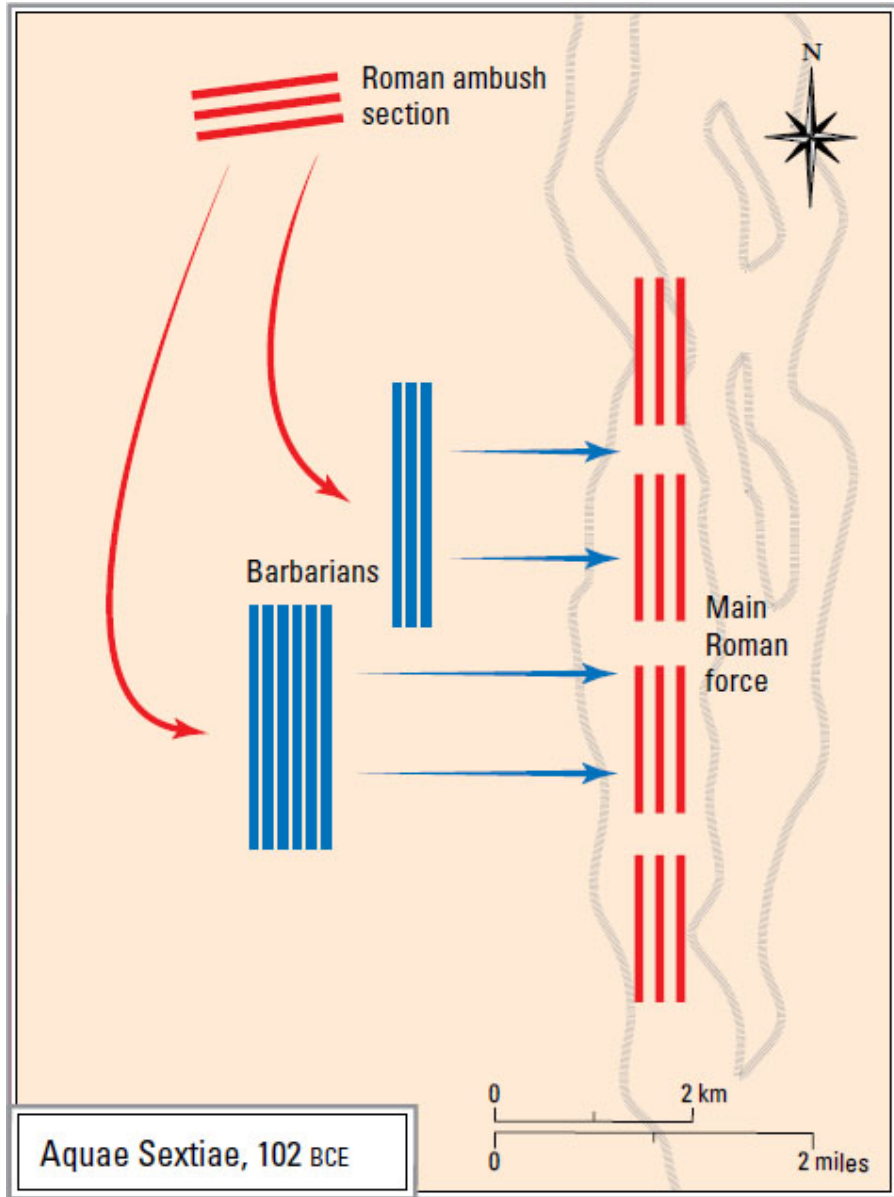
Although change had been ongoing for some time, the year of 107 BCE was highly significant. In this year Caius Marius implemented significant reforms, largely in order to circumvent laws that made it difficult to raise troops for a campaign in North Africa. However, the armies sent to Gaul had probably not benefited much, if at all, from these reforms.

The two Roman forces made separate camps and failed to coordinate their operations, even after a screening force was overrun by the Cimbri and Teutones. One of the Roman forces launched an unsupported attack and was easily defeated, allowing the other to be overwhelmed by vastly superior numbers. Caught with their backs to a river, few of the Romans were able to escape.

■ AQUAE SEXTIAE, 102 BCE

After the loss of possibly as many as 80,000 troops in the disaster at Arausio, Rome turned to Caius Marius to defend against the Cimbri and Teutones. Marius assumed command of what forces then existed and implemented a training programme that had proven very effective during his North African campaign.

Marius' regime became the standard training system for Roman troops thereafter. He emphasized physical fitness and stamina, which were built by training with double-weight weapons and long marches. He required his troops to carry their own gear, earning them the nickname of 'Marius' Mules' and did away with many of the servants and other encumbrances that landed men were wont to bring with them to the army.



Thus Marius' army was well disciplined and in good fighting condition, but it was essential to remain between the migrating tribes and Italy rather than seeking a battle and possibly pulling his force out of position. Marius was thus required to maintain a defensive position on the banks of the Rhone and watch for an attack, while the tribes wandered as far away as the Pyrenees. Eventually, they advanced to the Rhone with the intention of crossing.

Well aware of the intimidating appearance of the tribesmen, Marius was careful to protect the morale of his troops. These tribesmen had defeated no less than five consular armies during their march and, at

Arausio, had inflicted losses upon the Roman army to rival even the catastrophe at Cannae. Thus Marius would not at first engage them, remaining fortified in his camp. He ridiculed challenges to single combat, holding his troops back until they had a chance to accustom themselves to the appearance of their enemies.

The tribesmen launched an attack on Marius' camp, which was defeated. This suited Marius' purposes; he had showed his men that the enemy was not unbeatable. But even after this, he would not come out to fight as the tribes passed by and headed for Roman territory. Once they were past, the Romans broke camp and followed.

Caius Marius announced to his troops that he would fight when the correct moment arrived. At Aquae Sextiae, he decided that the time had come. However, combat broke out before he was ready, as a result of a skirmish that developed while both sides were obtaining water. The fight escalated, with the Romans defeating part of the tribal force. This further improved morale, and after a period of standoff, with both forces in close proximity, Marius detached a flanking force to conceal itself behind the enemy, and made preparations for battle.

Marius drew up his infantry at the top of a slope and sent his cavalry to make an attack on the enemy. As he had hoped, this provoked the tribal warriors into charging up the slope, arriving within *pila* range of the Romans in a breathless and disorganized state. The Romans' volley of javelins compounded the situation and was followed by a charge, which Marius led from the front rank.

The tribesmen were pushed back to the flat ground at the base of this slope, where they formed a defensive shieldwall and were able to stabilize the situation. The sudden attack of Marius' detached force in their rear caused the line to collapse, giving the Roman force a decisive victory.

■ VERCELLAE, 101 BCE

Although Marius' victory at Aquae Sextiae removed the worst threat to Roman territory, a significant force composed mainly of Cimbri tribesmen was able to force its way past a smaller Roman force under Catulus and enter Italy. Marius joined forces with Catulus to oppose the invasion. Accepting a formal challenge from the Cimbri, the Roman force met them at Vercellae and defeated them in a hard-fought and confused action.

Jugurthine War 111–104 BCE

■ SUTHUL, 110 BCE

King Jugurtha of Numidia understood both the Roman methods of war and their politics, and used both to his advantage. A combination of bribery and manoeuvring enabled him to defeat a Roman army near Suthul.

■ MUTHUL, 108 BCE

A divided Roman army was attacked by Jugurtha's forces whilst trying to obtain water. Caius Marius salvaged the situation with a display of initiative, but the Numidians were able to retreat in good order.

Rome's Social War 91–88 BCE

■ AESERNIA, 90 BCE

Remaining loyal to Rome, Aesernia was besieged by the Samnites but was able to resist for a long period. The city was eventually compelled to surrender by starvation and became an important administrative centre for the rebels.

■ RAIDS INTO LUCANIA/APULIA, 90 BCE

Roman control over Lucania and Apulia was greatly weakened by attacks launched by the rebels. The defeat of Roman field forces caused several cities to join the rebel cause, including Canusium and Venusia.

■ ASCULUM, 89 BCE

Disaffection among Rome's allies grew over time, and eventually resulted in open hostilities. Roman forces under the consul Gnaeus Pompeius Strabo besieged Asculum, blockading the city, despite Italian attempts to break the siege.

■ FUCINE LAKE, 89 BCE

The rebels had broken away from their alliance with Rome and declared their own nation, 'Italia'. However, support for their cause was reduced when Rome declared that cities that remained loyal (and some that had defected but returned to Roman allegiance) would receive citizenship and greater control over foreign policy. This was one of the main causes of the war, so the move weakened the Italians. Lucius Porcius Cato commanded Roman forces in the central region, and was mainly opposed by the Marsi tribe. Struggling with poor training levels and indiscipline among troops, as well as insubordination among the officers, Cato advanced to the Fucine Lake where he was killed in a failed attempt to storm a fortified Marsic camp.

■ ASCULUM, 89 BCE

A large Italian force attempted to break the siege of Asculum and was decisively defeated by Roman forces. This effectively decided the course of the war in the northern regions, breaking the rebels' strength.

First Mithridatic War 89–84 BCE

■ RIVER AMNIAS, 88 BCE

This battle was the opening engagement of the First Mithridatic War between Rome, its allies, and Mithridates VI of Pontus. A sudden devastating attack of Mithridates' Pontic scythed chariots scattered the Romans' Bithynian allies and forced a Roman retreat.

■ MOUNT SCOROBAS, 88 BCE

Following up on the Amnias victory, Mithridates captured and released more Roman allies here, afterwards falling upon the Roman general Manius's camp, capturing that with heavy casualties and evicting the Romans from Asia Minor.

■ ATHENS, 86 BCE

Athens joined with Mithridates in his war and slaughter of all Romans in the East. Mithridates' general Archelaus was not enough to stop L. Cornelius Sulla's conquest, devastation and partial sack of the historic city.



■ TENEDOS, 86 BCE

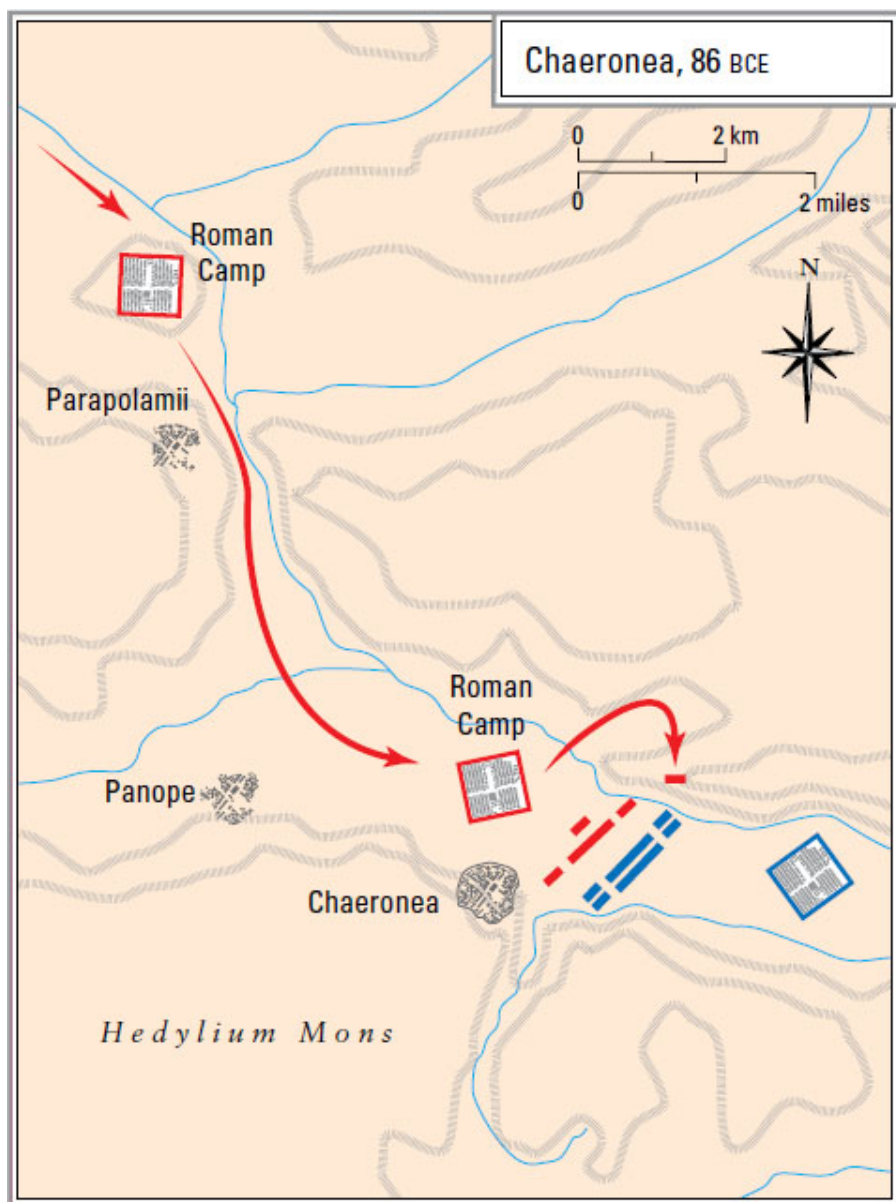
This battle was a naval defeat of the forces of Mithridates' admiral Neoptolemus by the Rhodian and allied fleet under Damagoras. Superb Rhodian ship-handling off the island's coast overcame superior Pontic numbers and larger ships in neutralizing Mithridates' navy.

■ CHAERONEA, 86 BCE

Mithridates' general Archelaus retreated north and eastward before Sulla's advance up from Athens, where he found reinforcement from a second Pontic army that had been consolidating Mithridates' gains in Macedonia and the north. Both sides had time to consolidate their

forces and prepare for a decisive battle, Sulla having manoeuvred Archelaus into this small plain between mountain spurs that prevented escape or retreat. Archelaus had sought to delay battle pending the arrival of additional troops from a third Pontic army en route by sea.

Mithridatic forces numbered some 140,000 Pontic and allied infantry, scythed chariots and conventional cavalry. Sulla commanded 30,000 Romans in five legions with an additional 10,000 or so Greeks and Macedonians returned to their allegiance.



Archelaus invited the Roman's advance into a trap reminiscent of

Hannibal's at Cannae by arranging his superior numbers in a crescent with infantry and scythed chariots in the centre. On the ends of his crescent he stationed his cavalry, with orders to envelop Sulla's forces as they advanced. Sulla, too, had read his history and the Roman formations opened as Alexander's had at Gaugamela, the scythed chariots charging harmlessly through the Romans' ranks. Sulla then attacked the Pontic left, with a Gaugamela-style rear reserve separately defeating the Pontic cavalry while Archelaus's centre collapsed. Mithridatic numbers surrounded both Sulla's main force and reserve, but superior Roman command and training allowed the separated forces to rejoin as the Pontic army collapsed in utter rout, unable to escape because of the surrounding mountains.

Pontic casualties in the ensuing slaughter may have been as many as 110,000, Roman losses orders of magnitude less.

■ ORCHOMENUS, 85 BCE

Having escaped in the confusion after Chaeronea with his surviving 10,000, Archelaus withdrew by sea until the final allotment of his reinforcements reached him, swelling the total numbers under his command to some 90,000 men. When these landed, Sulla moved his own command to this small Boetian village where he entrenched in the face of Archelaus's considerable numbers of cavalry. The Roman infantry in fact quailed in the trenches in the face of the Pontic horse, forcing Sulla to take personal command in the vanguard as he challenged his soldiers to save their general or live with the disgrace of his death. When their officers followed their commander's example, the infantry rallied and finally defeated the Pontic army, inflicting some 15,000 casualties. Sulla pursued the remnants of Archelaus's command into their camp, inflicting there still further casualties.

Roman Slave and Civil Wars 88–50 BCE

■ MOUNT TIFATA, 83 BCE

Returning from Asia Minor to take advantage of the power vacuum in Rome, Sulla was confronted by an army under Gaius Norbanus which had marched to intercept him. Defeated, Norbanus retreated to Capua.

■ COLLINE GATE, 82 BCE

Advancing on Rome, Lucius Cornelius Sulla was met at the Colline Gate by a large Samnite army. Largely through the efforts of Marcus Licinius Crassus, Sulla was victorious and drove off the Samnites. This spelled the end of Samnite power and ensured that the Social War did not flare up again. Sulla then entered the city and took control, declaring himself dictator.

■ BAETIS RIVER, 80 BCE

Forces loyal to Quintus Sertorius and opposed to Sulla were based largely in Hispania. A Roman army sent against them while they marched towards Lusitania was defeated at the Baetis river.

■ PICENUM, 72 BCE

The slave revolt led by Spartacus rapidly grew until he had around 70,000 followers, but their fighting ability may have been underestimated by the Roman authorities. At Picenum the rebels defeated a consular army before marching north towards Mutina.

■ MUTINA, 72 BCE

Marching north from Picenum, Spartacus' army continued to grow. A single legion based at Mutina was easily overrun, but internal conflicts among the rebels caused them to turn back southwards instead of crossing the Alps as originally intended.

■ CAMPANIA, 71 BCE

Marcus Licinius Crassus was given command of a large army with which to crush Spartacus' rebels. A part of his force attacked prematurely and was easily defeated, requiring a pause to regroup.

■ CAMPANIA II, 71 BCE

Renewing the offensive against Spartacus, Crassus inflicted a serious defeat and forced Spartacus to fall back to Rhegium. His attempt to cross into Sicily failed when the local pirates declined to provide transportation.

■ SILARUS RIVER, 71 BCE

Despite an attempt to break out of the toe of Italy, Spartacus' forces were crushed by Crassus' army near the headwaters of the Silarus river. This brought the rebellion to an end.

■ KORAKESION, 67 BCE

Charged with defeating the Cilician Pirates, Pompey the Great inflicted a sharp defeat at sea and then besieged his enemies in Korakesion. The siege was subsequently brought to a successful conclusion.

■ PISTORIA, 62 BCE

An attempt by the Senator Catiline to overthrow the Roman republic resulted in his army becoming caught between two republican forces. Launching an attack against one force, Catiline was defeated and killed in the fighting.

■ BOVILLAE, 52 BCE

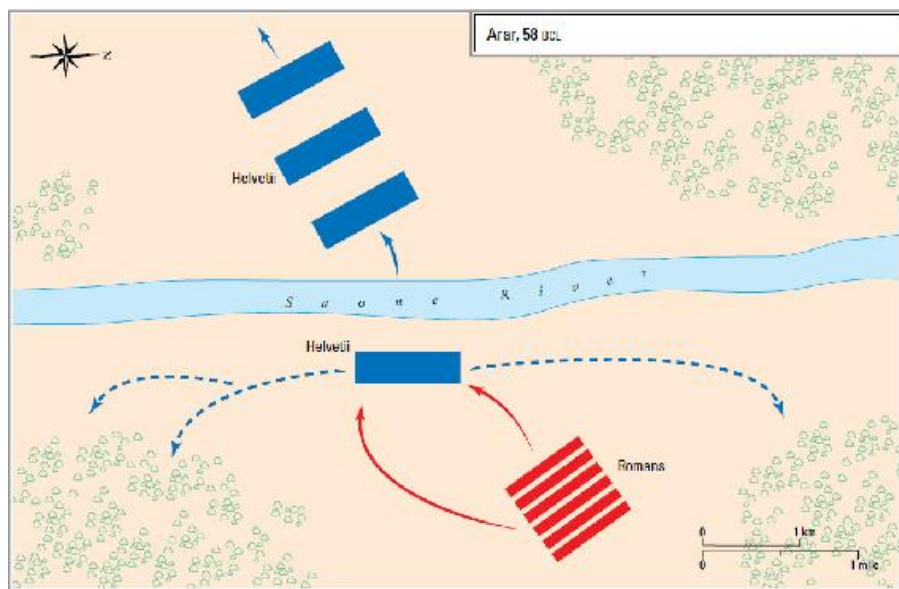
An encounter between the supporters of rival Roman politicians Clodius and Milo near Bovillae led to a bloody clash in which Clodius was killed. This in turn caused further violence in Rome itself.

Gallic Wars 58–52 BCE

■ ARAR, 58 BCE

The Helvetii tribe asked Rome for permission to migrate westwards. Taking advantage of this situation, Julius Caesar stalled their emissaries for weeks while his troops built fortifications at the River Rhone. The Helvetii then attempted to march around the defended line, taking them into the territory of the Aedui tribe, who were friendly to Rome. The Aedui requested assistance, giving Caesar the excuse to attack the Helvetii that he had wanted all along.

Caesar's forces caught up with the Helvetii as they crossed the River Arar (the modern Saône). They were moving as four cantons, and three were already across the river. The fourth was attacked whilst thus isolated and suffered severe casualties, though many tribespeople were able to escape into nearby woods. Caesar's army then bridged the Arar and pursued the Helvetii.



■ BIBRACTE (MOUNT BEAUVAY), 58 BCE

In need of supplies, Caesar's army turned aside from pursuing the migrating Helvetii tribe and marched towards Bibracte. The Helvetii began to harass the rear of the Roman army, which drew up in battle order on Mount Beauvay. The initial Gallic attack was repulsed, but the legions were then flanked. The third line of the Roman force was tasked with holding off this attack while the first lines eventually outfought their opponents in battle.

■ VESONTIO, 58 BCE

After a period of manoeuvring and standoff near Vesontio, Caesar forced a battle by attacking the camp of the Suebi. As he had planned, Caesar's right-flank legions broke the enemy opposite them, driving the Suebi back across the Rhine.

■ VOSGES, 58 BCE

King Ariovistus of the Suebi avoided battle with the Romans for as long as possible, awaiting reinforcements from across the Rhine, but was eventually brought to action. Caesar's forces made a frontal attack, concentrating on the weaker German left. Their own left flank came close to defeat but was reinforced by reserves brought up from the third line. Ariovistus' troops were gradually outfought and eventually broke, after which they were pursued back across the Rhine.

■ AXONA, 57 BCE

An attack by the Belgae on a Roman-allied Gallic tribe caused Caesar to launch a campaign against them. An initial, inconclusive, skirmish led to an attempt by the Belgae to outflank the strong Roman position by attacking across the river Axona. Caesar launched an immediate counterattack with cavalry and light troops, repelling the attack. The Belgae then began to retreat and, once he was sure this was not a trick, Caesar pursued and inflicted severe casualties.

■ SAMBRE RIVER (SABIS), 57 BCE

Advancing into the lands of the Belgae, Caesar's force began making camp near the Sambre river, sending detachments to attack the Belgae as they attempted to flee across the river. A vigorous counter-attack by the Belgae caught Caesar's main body unprepared and, in the ensuing chaotic melee, the Romans came close to total defeat. Eventually, superior discipline and the arrival of reinforcements turned the battle in Caesar's favour.

■ OCTODUROS, 57 BCE

Detached from the main Roman army, a legion under the command of Servius Sulpicius Galba was sent on a foray into the lands of the Nantuates. The legion occupied the tribal stronghold at Octoduros, but was ultimately defeated.

■ MORIBHAN GULF, 56 BCE

Caesar's fleet offset the superior ships of their Veneti opponents by using boarding tactics, augmenting the crews with legionaries. The Veneti were defeated piecemeal when their ships were left strung out by a changing wind.

■ COBLENZ, 55 BCE

Facing an invasion of Gaul by Germanic tribes, Julius Caesar's forces inflicted a sharp defeat at Coblenz. The legions then built a bridge over the Rhine as a demonstration of Roman superiority, which

helped subdue the tribes.

■ TONGRES (ADUATUCA), 57 BCE

After the defeat of the Belgic tribes by Caesar's forces, the Atuatuci retreated to their capital where they were besieged. After an attempt to break out of the town failed, it was stormed and the population sold into slavery.

■ CAESAR'S INVASION OF BRITAIN, 55–54 BCE

Caesar's initial invasion of Britain, in 55 BCE, was little more than reconnaissance in force, though lessons were learned from the expedition. These included the need for ships better suited to a beach landing and the expectation of significant resistance by the Britons.

In 54 BCE Roman forces probed inland, beating off attacks by the Britons, but were required to halt operations to repair their ships after a storm. A second foray inland was met by a large force of Britons, who quickly discovered that their odds in a pitched battle were poor. The Britons used their chariots to skirmish and wear down the Romans, who nevertheless reached the Thames and forced a crossing.

Some tribes surrendered to Caesar and offered tribute, while others launched an attack on the beachhead where the Roman ships remained under guard. The defeat of this assault marked the end of British resistance, after which Caesar returned to Gaul.

■ AGENDICUM, 52 BCE

Galic troops positioned themselves across the rear of a detachment of Caesar's force under the command of Quintus Labienus, then headed for Lutetia. The legions defeated this force to clear their line of communications.

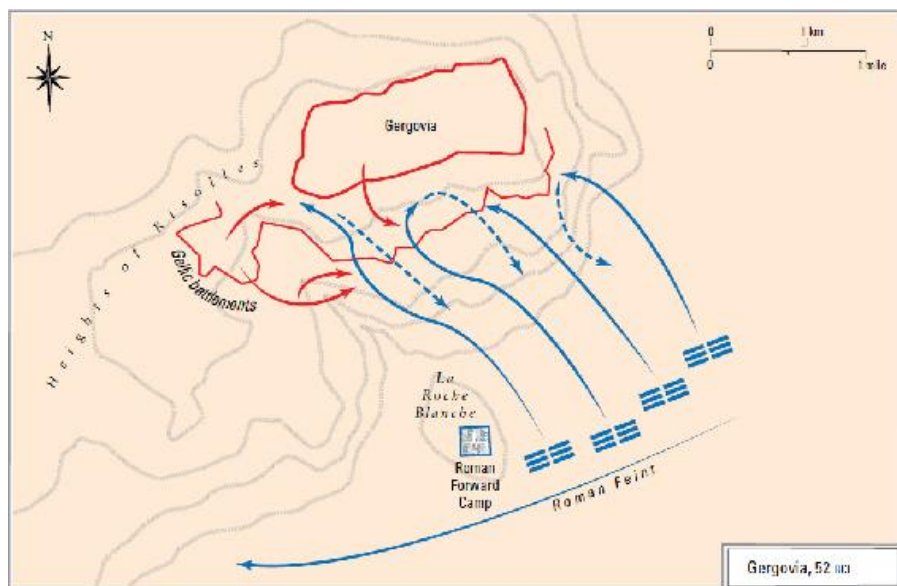
■ AVARICUM (BOURGES), 52 BCE

Unable to defeat Caesar in open battle, the Gauls decided on a scorched-earth strategy, but left Avaricum intact as the city was strongly fortified. Caesar laid siege to the city, but was suffering from an acute shortage of supplies. Despite raids by Gallic troops, the legions were able to build siege towers and ramps to allow them to be moved up to the walls. The city was then successfully stormed and the defenders massacred.

■ GERGOVIA, 52 BCE

Caesar's campaigns in Gaul caused a degree of polarization among the Gallic tribes. Some remained friendly to Rome and supplied Caesar's army while others, overtly or otherwise, supported the leader of the Gauls, Vercingetorix. Support for Caesar depended greatly on his ability to demonstrate the effectiveness of his army; allies who felt that Caesar could not protect them were likely to defect. Thus, when Vercingetorix attacked Gergovia, Caesar needed to dislodge him quickly. This was made problematical by a poor supply situation, but

while it may have been more prudent to remain in winter quarters, this was not an option as it would expose Roman weakness to their allies and possibly result in desertion.



Caesar detached four of his ten legions to campaign against the Senones and the Parisii. With the remainder he marched on Gergovia. Vercingetorix' army attempted to block his crossing of the River Allier, but was decoyed out of position by part of Caesar's army, while the rest of the force rebuilt a bridge and reached the far bank. Vercingetorix retreated to Gergovia, followed by Caesar who found the city strongly fortified and barricaded against him.

The Romans began siege preparations, capturing a hill and fortifying it against counter-attack. However, a rebellion among the previously allied Aedui tribe interrupted the siege. Caesar needed to reunite his forces without being seen to retreat, so ordered a limited attack on part of the Gallic defences. This developed into a large-scale assault which was defeated.

Despite this setback, Caesar drew up his army in battle order. When Vercingetorix did not accept the challenge to come out and fight, Caesar was able to portray this as weakness on his part and broke contact, marching north to concentrate his forces.

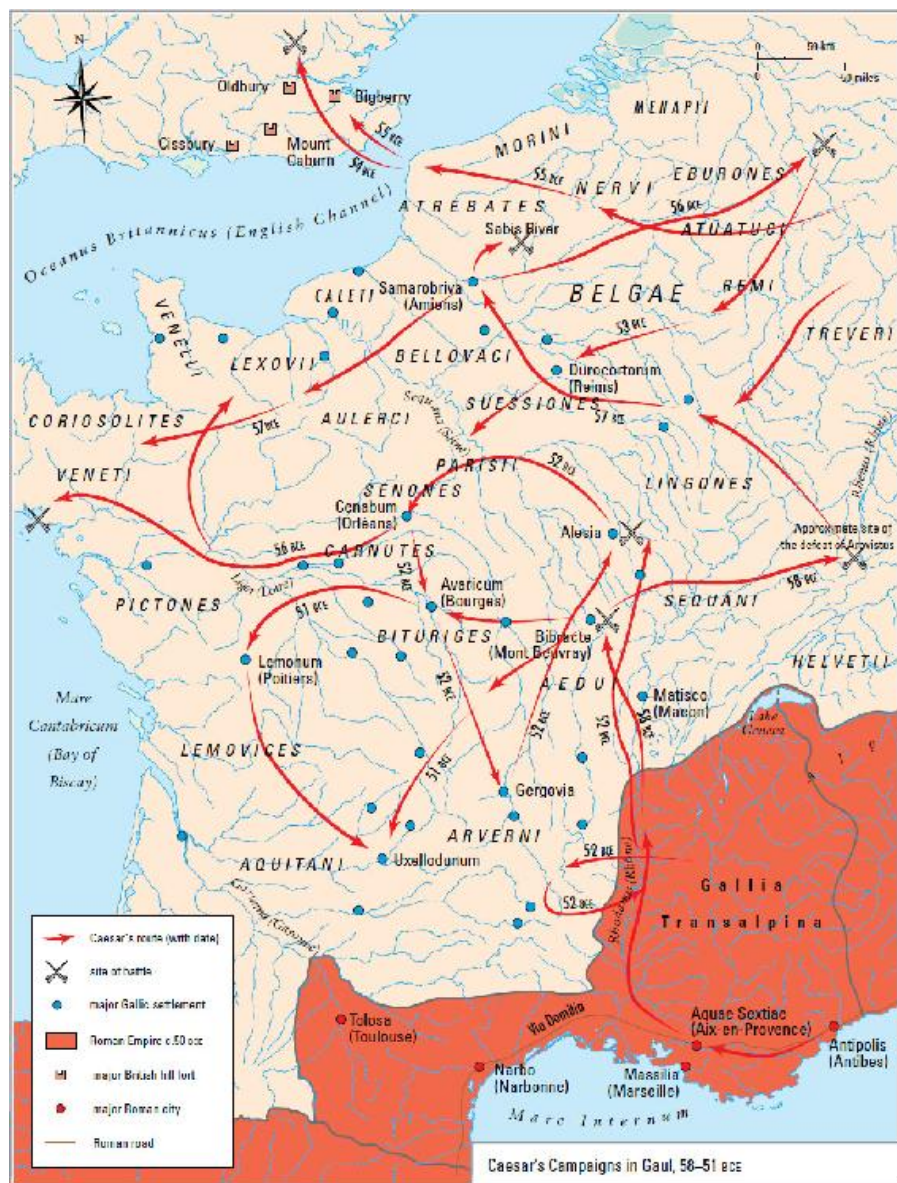
■ VINGEANNE, 52 BCE

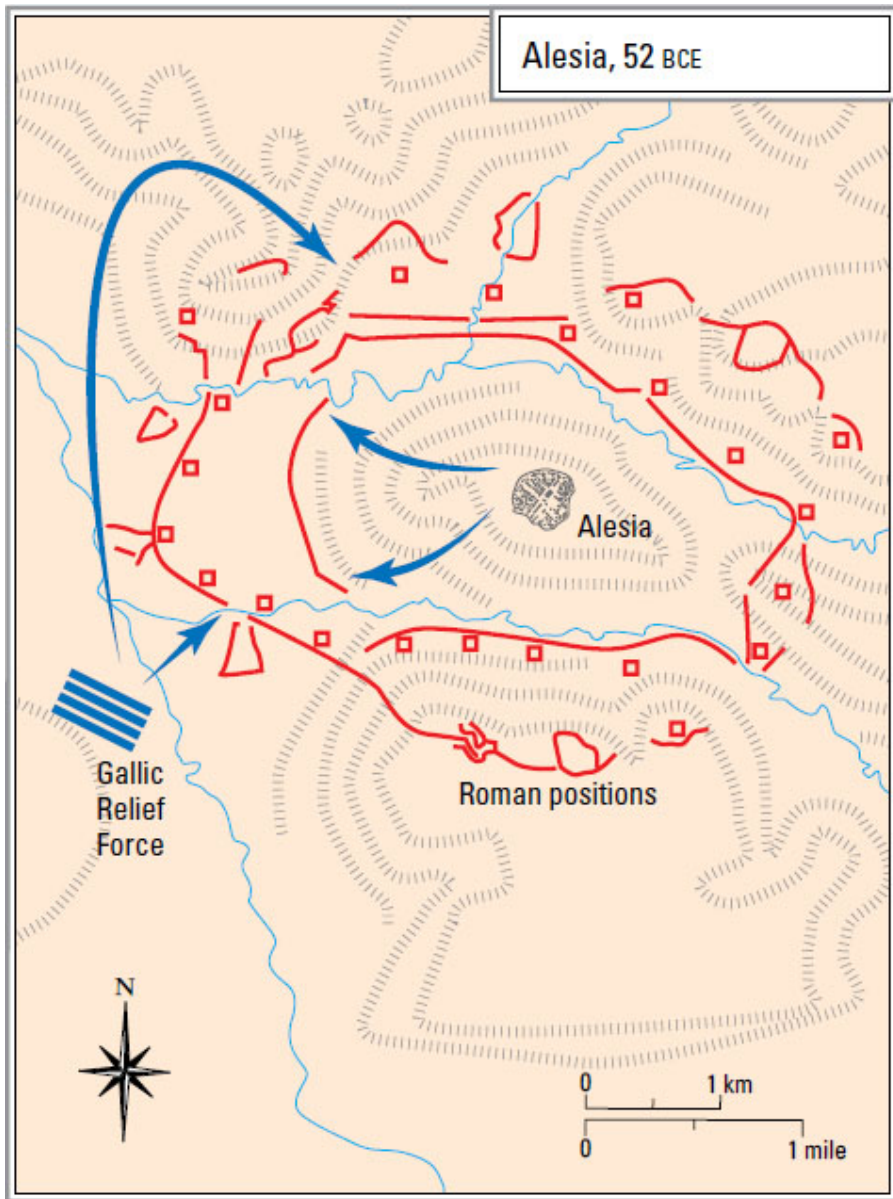
As Caesar's army marched through the Vingeanne valley, it was attacked by a large Gallic force with a sizable cavalry contingent. The battle opened with a Gallic cavalry attack that fell mainly on the Roman flanks. Although hard pressed, the Roman cavalry, supported by infantry, were eventually able to defeat their Gallic counterparts. The Gallic army was vigorously pursued and sought refuge in Alesia,

which was then besieged.

■ ALESIA, 52 BCE

The loss of Avaricum to Roman forces did not unduly concern Vercingetorix, leader of the Gallic opposition to Caesar. Vercingetorix had argued that the city should not be held against the Romans in the first place, so its fall simply proved him right. He thus retained the confidence of the many tribes involved in the conflict, and was able to field a large force that grew as more tribes joined the war.





After failing to storm Gergovia, Caesar decided to concentrate his forces, and called in reinforcements in the form of auxiliary troops and Germanic mercenaries. Vercingetorix followed Caesar's march to re-unite his forces, resulting in several skirmishes that developed into a more decisive action. This was lost by the Gauls, who retreated with the Romans in pursuit.

The Gauls made a stand at the city of Alesia, where Caesar besieged them. This required the construction of two parallel siege lines – one facing inward and one outward – as Alesia lay in hostile territory and the Roman force might well be attacked by a relief force or raiding

parties. The lines consisted of earth-and-timber forts connected by a wall of the same construction. In front of this was a double ditch to impede attackers. Vercingetorix launched numerous raids as the siege lines were built, but was unable to prevent their completion. This meant that he was cut off, but not before Vercingetorix' cavalry fought its way out of the city to join a relief force.

As supplies began to run out in Alesia, Vercingetorix sent all non-combatants out of the town. They could not pass the Roman lines and were left to starve between the fortifications of the town and those of the besiegers. Hope for the defenders rested on the arrival of a relief force, which in due course appeared before the city.

The Gallic relief attempt opened with a cavalry attack, which resulted in a widespread running fight between the horsemen of both sides and some supporting light infantry. The battle was eventually won by the Romans, who inflicted severe casualties. Meanwhile, the Gauls within the siege line attempted to take advantage of this diversion to fill in parts of the Roman ditch, facilitating an assault.

Vercingetorix then launched a breakout attempt at night, while the relief army attacked the Roman positions from the outside. The fighting was intense and confused, but was eventually stabilized by the effective use of Roman reinforcements. The besieged and the relief force fell back, but attacked again the next day.

Under cover of diversionary assaults at various points on the Roman defences, the relief army attacked one of the main Roman forts. Vercingetorix became aware of the attack and once more led his forces out to attempt a breakout. Once again the Romans were hard-pressed, but the legionaries were well led and highly disciplined. Just as importantly, they were confident that reinforcements would be sent to them. Although some areas came under very heavy attack, most were able to hold out as Caesar transferred reinforcements along the line, and back again, to deal with the next crisis point.

At the height of the fighting, Vercingetorix' men managed to penetrate the Roman lines and destroy part of the defences. This final attempt was contained by a counter-attack that required virtually all of the available Roman troops, but decided the battle. The relief force fell back and Vercingetorix was unable to break out. The next day he agreed to surrender to Caesar.

Wars of the First Triumvirate/Rome 53–44 BCE

■ CARRHAE, 53 BCE

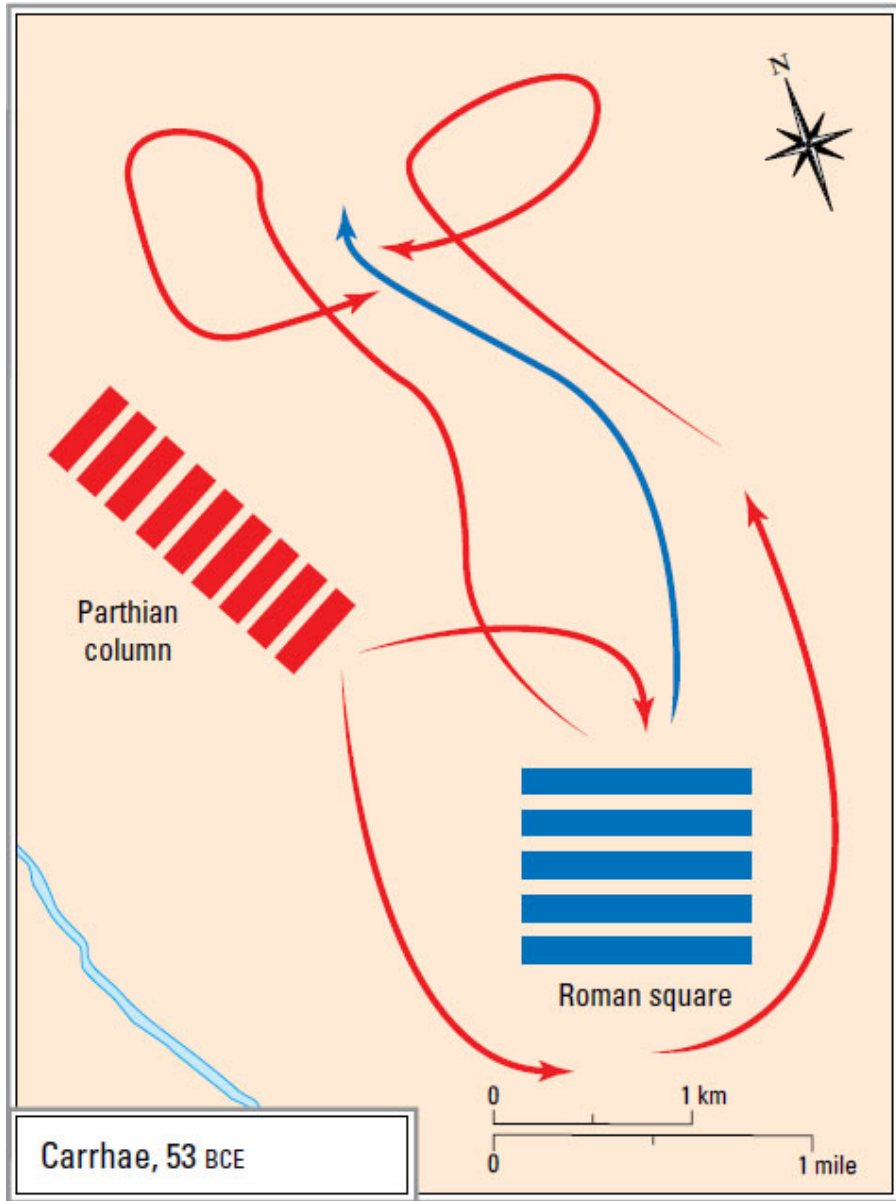
In choosing Parthia as the target for an invasion Marcus Licinius Crassus, political ally of Caesar and Pompey, made a serious mistake. Most of the eastern regions conquered by Rome were heavily influenced by the Greek or Macedonian methods of fighting, and were heavily dependent upon dense bodies of pike-armed infantry. Repeated clashes had shown that Roman armies were superior in fighting power, discipline and tactics to these forces, and Crassus therefore assumed that his army would be able to defeat whatever he encountered.

Crassus sailed from Italy with seven legions plus some Gallic cavalry, and hired Arab mercenaries to augment this force. He followed the River Tigris, using it to transport supplies, and thus brought his large army across the Euphrates into Parthian territory. Several cities surrendered and a successful assault on Zendotia brought in significant booty. Garrisoning these conquests reduced the Roman force, which waited out the winter in Syria and then advanced once again.

Crassus had failed to appreciate two important factors when he planned his campaign. One was the terrain in which he would have to fight. Lacking many clear objectives, it required long marches through dry and inhospitable terrain. Slow-moving infantry-based forces were confined to certain routes where water could be obtained or brought up, while a cavalry army could move more freely. This was the other significant factor. Roman armies were ideally suited to breaking infantry-based forces but could not manoeuvre fast enough to catch an all-cavalry force such as that of the Parthians. The latter used armoured cavalry as their shock arm, but could afford to wait until their horse archers had worn down the enemy before committing to a charge.

As Crassus advanced on Seleucia, the Parthian army confronted him. Crassus' first response was to form a very long and thin line, suggesting that he had not considered how to deal with such a threat. He then ordered the line folded back to form a hollow square which had no flanks to be turned by more mobile cavalry.

Crassus' army then advanced, slowly, in this formation until they were close to the waiting Parthians. The Romans' mercenary Arab cavalry made off before the fighting started, leaving Crassus with little in the way of mobile forces.



The Parthians feigned a charge but instead surrounded the Roman square with a cloud of horse archers who kept up a ceaseless barrage of arrows. The legionaries' pila lacked the range to return fire, though some of the light troops were able to shoot back with bows.



Crassus launched a counter-attack with cavalry and some legionaries, but the Parthians fell back before it and drew this force away from the main body before forcing it into a defensive formation with the threat of a charge. The detachment was then showered with arrows until the survivors surrendered. As the main square was worn down by archery, the Parthian heavy cavalry began making a series of charges, pulling back after each to avoid a counter-attack.

Nightfall saved the Romans from total destruction, allowing the survivors to reach the town of Carrhae. From there an attempt was made to escape by marching at night, but this ended in disaster as the retreating force was caught and attacked again. The majority of the remaining Roman troops surrendered, though some were able to reach friendly territory.

■ ANTIGONEA, 51 BCE

After defeating Crassus' invasion, Parthian forces advanced into Roman-held Syria. Near Antigonea, the main Parthian army was drawn into an ambush by Roman cavalry, allowing the legionaries to achieve a decisive victory which ended the campaign.

■ RUBICON RIVER, 49 BCE

Rather than return to Rome without his army, which would make him vulnerable to his enemies, Caesar entered Italy with one legion. Crossing the Rubicon river was an act of war against Rome, and began a long civil war.

■ MASSILIA, 49 BCE

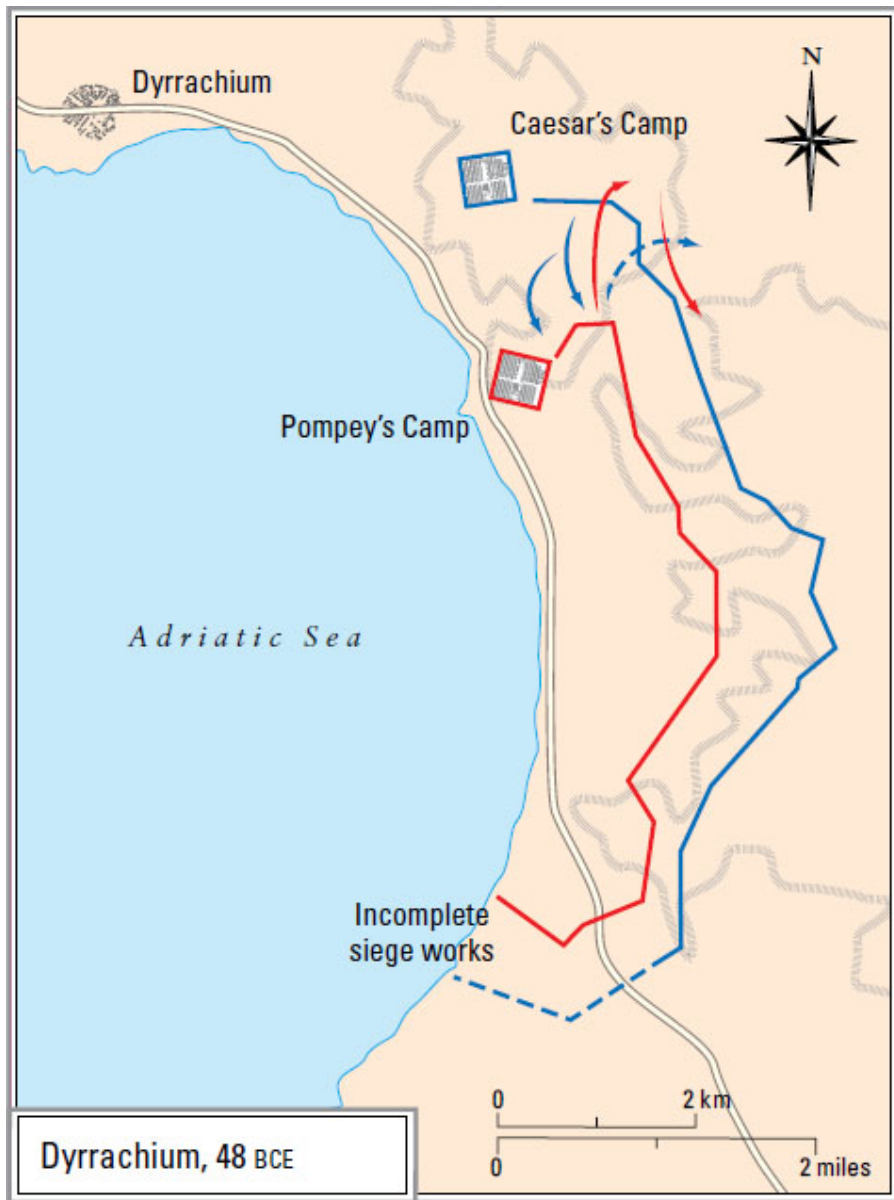
Caesar took control of Rome without undue difficulty, and from there marched towards Hispania, where some of his enemies were raising forces against him. The city of Massilia was held by his opponents,

forcing Caesar's army to launch a siege to capture the city. Naval forces fought to prevent the city from being resupplied until the siege was brought to a successful conclusion. Massilia became a Roman possession after its conquest.

■ ILLERDA, 49 BCE

While detached forces reduced Massilia, Caesar marched on into Hispania to confront forces loyal to Pompey the Great. A confrontation developed near Illerda, with a Pompeiian army under Afranius. Caesar at first drew up in battle order to cover the construction of a fortified camp. Once the camp was established, Caesar attempted to gain control of high ground that dominated the battlefield. Pompey's force also sent troops to seize the rise.

As Caesar's detachment was pushed back towards the camp, Caesar counter-attacked with one of the Ninth Legion and drove them back in turn. As the defeated Pompeiian troops sought the safety of Illerda's fortifications, Caesar's legionaries were drawn too close to the city and forced to retreat hurriedly.



The Ninth Legion made a fighting retreat as additional enemy reinforcements joined the action. Caesar sent detachments to support his legion, resulting in a larger-scale battle that lasted several hours. This was finally won by a charge launched by Caesar's forces, which again drove the enemy back to the town. Taking advantage of the situation, Caesar's forces broke off the action and fell back, supported by cavalry.

After a period of standoff, Afranius' forces began to retire and were pursued. They had hoped to join up with other forces from their faction, but were blocked by Caesar and forced to retire back to Ilerda.

After a siege this force surrendered, allowing Caesar to confront the other Pompey-aligned army in Hispania.

This force surrendered without a battle, many troops coming over to Caesar's side, and with Hispania secured Caesar marched back to Massilia.

■ UTICA, 49 BCE

Caesar's opponents included Publius Attius Varus, who went to North Africa and began to raise troops. He was offered support by King Juba of Numidia, but Juba's army was defeated at Utica by Caesarean forces.

■ BAGRADAS RIVER, 49 BCE

After an initial success against Juba's army, Caesarean forces were drawn into an ambush and suffered massive casualties. Part of the Caesarean force gained the safety of a hilltop and held out for a time, but were eventually overwhelmed by the opposing forces.

■ ILLYRIA, 49 BCE

While Caesar was campaigning in Hispania, Pompey's forces attempted to clear pro-Caesar garrisons from Illyria. Caesar's governor in Illyria, Gaius Antonius, was besieged on the island of Curicta by Pompey's fleet, and was eventually starved into surrender.

■ DYRRACHIUM, 48 BCE

Besieged in his camp by Caesar's army, Pompey attempted a breakout. Despite a counterattack by the outnumbered Caesarean forces, Pompey was able to push through the siege lines and turn Caesar's flank, forcing a withdrawal.

■ PHARSALUS, 48 BCE

Having defeated Julius Caesar at Dyrrachium, Pompey pursued a cautious strategy but, in response to political pressure, engaged Caesar's forces in battle on the banks of the river Enipeus near Pharsalus. Caesar's army was outnumbered two to one and was desperately short of supplies.

Phase 1

0 1 km
0 1 mile



Pompey's
camp

Pompey



Caesar's
camp

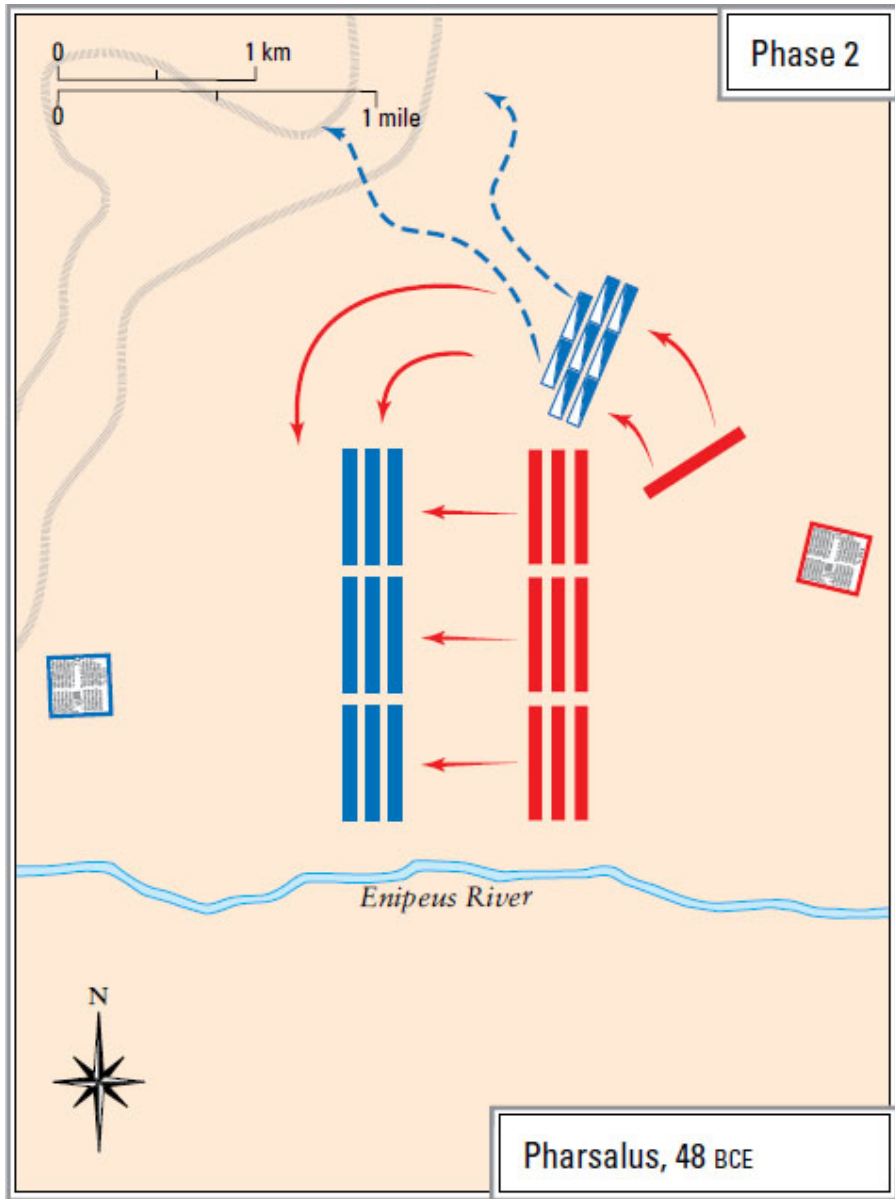


Caesar

Enipeus River

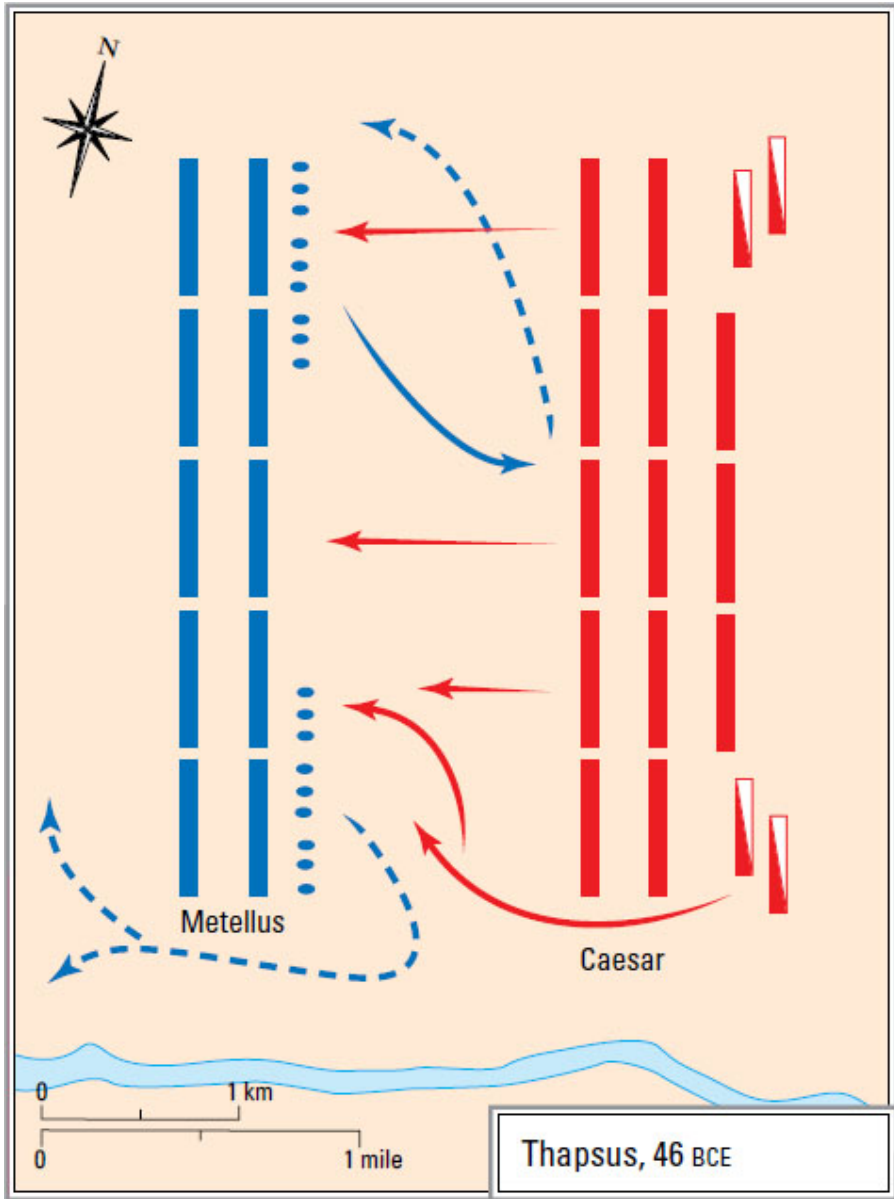


Pharsalus, 48 BCE



Pompey deployed his forces in the conventional three lines, with the river covering his right flank. He massed his cavalry on the left. Caesar deployed his main force in a similar manner but less depth, reinforcing his outnumbered cavalry with a force of light infantry to cover his exposed flank. Caesar needed a decisive outcome whereas Pompey could afford to simply avoid defeat; his army was well supplied whereas Caesar's force would starve if it did not win this battle. Expecting Caesar's troops to be weakened by lack of food, Pompey ordered his own men to receive their charge rather than counter-charging, forcing the Caesarean legions to further tire

themselves by covering more ground. Caesar's experienced troops instead halted and reformed their lines, resting before moving up to the attack and depriving Pompey of his expected advantage. Pompey's cavalry charged but ran into unexpectedly heavy resistance, and were then attacked by Caesar's flank infantry force. They were driven off, allowing Caesar's troops to fall on the flank of the thus far indecisive infantry melee. Fearing all was lost, Pompey fled to his camp and from thence to Egypt where he was assassinated. Leaderless, his army collapsed, granting Caesar the decisive victory he needed at relatively low cost. Defeat at Pharsalus broke the power of the Senatorial faction and ensured Caesar's ultimate victory in the civil war, though resistance continued for some time.



■ NICOPOLIS, 48 BCE

As the focus of Caesar's campaign moved to Egypt, King Pharnaces II of Pontus invaded Roman territory. Roman forces intercepted the invaders but were forced to make a fighting withdrawal when their local auxiliaries fled the field.

■ ALEXANDRIA, 47 BCE

After defeat at Pharsalus, Pompey the Great fled to Egypt, where he was assassinated on the orders of Pharaoh Ptolemy XIII. Caesar had intended to be lenient upon his old friend Pompey, and was greatly displeased. He placed Cleopatra on the throne, causing Ptolemy to

besiege Alexandria where Caesar was based. Caesar's forces were able to hold out until relief arrived from Judea and Asia Minor.

■ NILE, 47 BCE

Marching to break the siege of Alexandria, Mithridates of Pergamum was intercepted by an Egyptian force which he was able to defeat. Upon hearing that his ally was within marching distance, Caesar left Alexandria lightly garrisoned and joined forces with his ally. Caesar's army defeated that of Ptolemy XIII on the banks of the Nile, breaking up the Egyptian spear phalanx with pila before closing to attack.

■ ZELA, 47 BCE

Caesar left Egypt to deal with Pharnaces II's invasion, and was attacked as his army made its usual fortified camp. Although initially hard-pressed the Romans were able to launch a counter-attack that drove Pharnaces' army from the field.

■ RUSPINA, 46 BCE

Defeat in Hispania and Greece left Caesar's enemies with significant holdings only in North Africa; Caesar's victory here would therefore bring the civil war to a close. Caesar faced forces under his former subordinate Titus Labienus, who managed to catch Caesar by surprise. Caesar's cavalry and some of his legionaries were driven off by a cavalry attack. The remainder managed to adopt a defensive position and held out until enemy reinforcements drove them back to their camp.

■ THAPSUS, 46 BCE

Caesar's army laid siege to Thapsus, forcing his opponents to offer battle. Their army included a large number of war elephants, which were countered by archers as far as possible. The arrows caused some of the elephants to stampede through their own lines; the remainder were fought off by the legionaries. As his infantry gradually gained the upper hand, Caesar's cavalry was able to outflank the enemy and capture their camp.

■ MUNDA, 45 BCE

After defeat in Africa, the last of Caesar's opponents fled to Hispania. Caesar followed, and after some skirmishing, Caesar defeated his enemies in an extremely hard-fought set-piece battle, bringing the civil war to a close. Caesar lost more than 1000 killed and at least 5000 wounded.

Wars of the Second Triumvirate/Rome 43–31 BCE

■ FORUM GALLORUM, 43 BCE

Intercepting an inexperienced Republican force sent to assist Brutus, who was cornered near Mutina, Mark Antony inflicted a defeat on the forces of Pansa, who was killed. But while Antony's men were celebrating their victory further Republican forces under Hirtius unexpectedly turned up and forced Antony to make a retreat. Antony in turn rallied his army and retreated to Mutina.

■ PHILIPPI, 42 BCE

War between the assassins of Julius Caesar and the Second Triumvirate of Octavian, Mark Antony and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, came to a close near Philippi in Macedonia. Having secured Italy, the Triumvirs left Lepidus in control there and took 28 legions to Macedonia where the assassins Brutus and Cassius were gathering strength.

Brutus and Cassius established themselves in strong positions within supporting distance of one another, though the reliability of some of their troops was questionable. These men had served Caesar and might now balk at making war on his heir, Octavian, in the name of Caesar's assassins. Propaganda and bribery were used to improve loyalty.

Unable to entice the assassins out of their positions, Mark Antony attempted to outflank them by throwing a causeway across the marshes protecting their southern flank. Cassius's attempt to block this move resulted in an engagement in which Antony attacked Cassius's positions while the forces of Brutus finally left their strong positions to attack Octavian.

The overall outcome was inconclusive, with Cassius defeated on one side and Octavian on the other. However, whilst Octavian survived the battle, Cassius, the most able Republican commander, committed suicide in despair at what he thought was a complete disaster.

On the same day as the first battle of Philippi, the Republican fleet was able to intercept and destroy the triumvirs' reinforcements. The interception of reinforcements offset any gains that Antony and Octavian had made, and their supply situation was poor. However, they were able to push a line of fortifications towards Brutus' positions and to occupy what had been Cassius's camp.

Brutus wanted to avoid battle, but was forced to engage by, among other things, concerns about defection among his troops. His frontal assault was defeated after intense fighting and, cut off from his camp, Brutus committed suicide rather than be captured. His suicide brought

Octavian's forces.

■ **GINDARUS, 38 BCE**

Parthian cavalry invading Syria was met by Roman forces positioned on high ground. Making good use of supporting slingers, the Romans were able to defeat the Parthian cavalry attack and inflict a decisive defeat.

■ **PHRAASPA, 36 BCE**

Mark Antony invaded Parthia and besieged the capital, Phraaspa, without success. Depleted by disease and Parthian harassing attacks, the Roman army withdrew. Mark Antony ultimately established himself in Egypt, in alliance with Cleopatra.

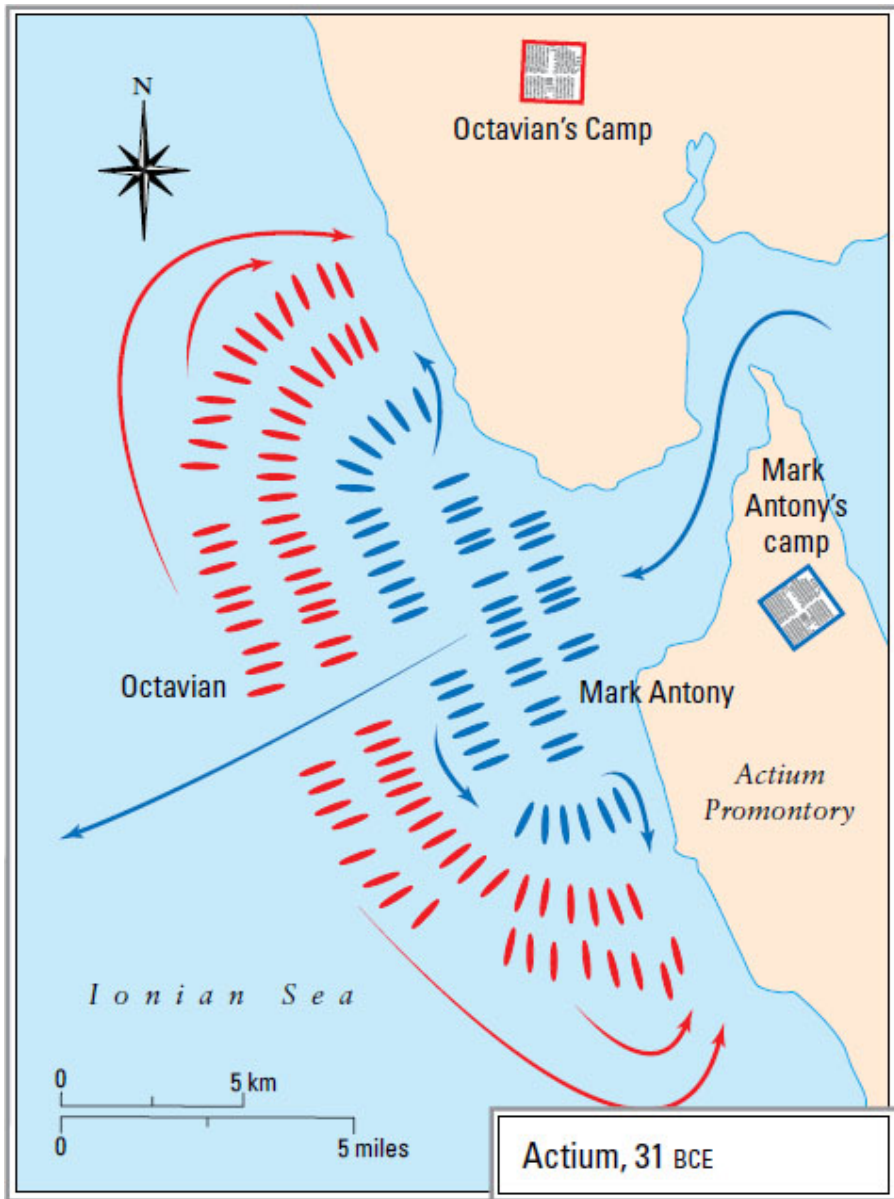
■ **NAULOCBUS, 36 BCE**

Sextus Pompey, son of Pompey the Great, wielded significant influence over the affairs of Rome, through his control of Sicily and its grain supply. To secure his support, Mark Antony and Octavian offered Sextus an alliance. This was short-lived, and again the grain was cut off. Building a fleet of improved vessels. Octavian ordered a naval campaign that culminated in a hard-fought battle off Naulochus. Sextus' fleet was defeated, giving control of Sicily to Octavian.

■ **ACTIUM, 31 BCE**

The alliance between Mark Antony and Octavian collapsed largely due to Antony's association with Cleopatra of Egypt. This alliance not only snubbed Octavian, to whose sister Antony was married, but created suspicions that Antony intended to use Cleopatra's son Caesarion (allegedly the child of Julius Caesar) as a political tool to gain control of Rome. Rifts between Antony and Octavian had existed for some time, but now the conflict became open.

Both factions built up large fleets, and Antony attempted to strike the first blow. This was thwarted by Octavian's naval forces, so Antony set up a base at Actium. A period of skirmishing ensued, while Antony waited for additional forces to arrive. During this time Octavian's land forces closed in on Antony. He was advised by Cleopatra, who had supplied a large part of his fleet, to withdraw his fleet to Egypt, and eventually he conceded.



Learning that Antony intended to withdraw, Octavian resolved to force a battle. As Antony's fleet exited the straits, Octavian's ships launched their attack. Octavian also knew of Antony's battle plan and where he intended to strike his heaviest blow. Octavian's more manoeuvrable ships were able to concentrate against their chosen targets and avoid ramming attacks by the heaviest of Antony's vessels. The battle was hard-fought even though Antony's sailors were weakened by disease and some ships were undermanned. The issue was still in some doubt when Cleopatra's squadron broke off and fled. This caused Antony's fleet to dissolve into chaos and many of his ships

followed suit. Both Antony and Cleopatra were able to break off and escape with a few ships, but most of the fleet was trapped against the shore and defeated.

■ ALEXANDRIA, 30 BCE

Although losing men to desertion, Mark Antony's army was able to defeat Octavian's first attempt at an invasion of Egypt. A second attempt overwhelmed the weakened Antonian forces, after which Egypt was annexed as a Roman province.

Second Mithridatic War 83–81 BCE

■ **HALYS, 82 BCE**

Quarrelling Roman generals Murena and Gordius provoked Mithridates by their looting and were routed in detail on either bank of the river, which bordered Pontus. The Pontic success re-inflamed resentment of the Romans in Asia.

Third Mithridatic War 75–65 BCE

■ CYZICUS, 74 BCE

Mithridates personally laid siege with 300,000 men to this vital city at the entrance to the Black Sea as he sought to follow up on Roman reverses in Asia. Defectors produced by Rome's ongoing civil wars aided him considerably in both strategy and tactics. Cyzicus's fortifications and defenders endured long months of continued assaults with Mithridates' engineers employing some of the more advanced siege equipment against their walls and harbour. Consul L. Licinius Lucullus and 30,000 legionaries moved to the city's relief and blocked Mithridates' supply lines in a fortified camp in a vital pass, from which they launched harassing attacks. With his own army starving faster than the inhabitants of Cyzicus, Mithridates abruptly retreated. Lucullus at once left his camp and attacked, inflicting still more casualties and driving Mithridates back into his own kingdom.

■ CABIRA, 72 BCE

Invading Pontus, Lucullus suffered reverses advancing to this fortress in the heart of Pontus, even as residual Mithridatic forces cut his supply line to the coast. Alerted by beacons, Mithridates dispatched considerable cavalry against the Romans, trapping them on a neighbouring mountain. Mutual probing favoured the Romans until a sudden assault drove green Pontic troops in a disordered retreat, leading to the collapse and rout of the Pontic army.

■ TIGRANOCERTA, 69 BCE

Mithridates having fled to Armenia, Lucullus and 16,000 weary soldiers gave battle here to the Armenian king, Tigranes. Tigranes' contempt for the outnumbered Romans allowed Lucullus to defeat his arrayed forces in detail, capturing Tigranocerta.

■ ARTAXATA, 68 BCE

Facing two kingdoms with no support from Rome, Lucullus advanced to the Armenian capital in the face of Mithridates' and Tigranes' withdrawing armies. Having forced a fight and concentrated his foes, Lucullus defeated each separately.

■ LYCUS, 66 BCE

Pompey renewed Lucullus's advance into central Pontus with 50,000 men. Mithridates found his movements restricted by Roman field fortifications. With his 33,000 men at a loss for supplies, Mithridates attempted a retreat. His force disintegrated.

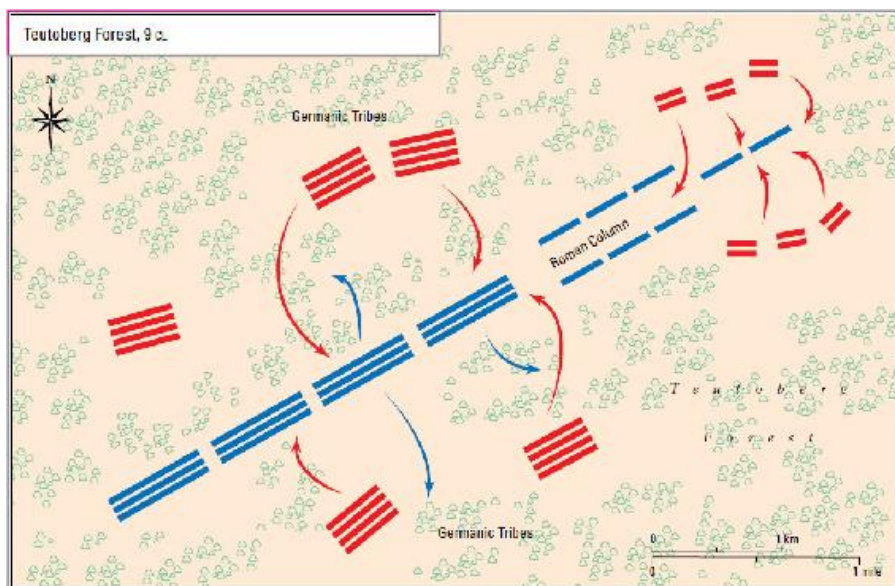
Roman Imperial Wars 27 BCE–200 CE

■ LUPIA RIVER, 11 BCE

Nero Claudius Drusus invaded the territory of the German Sugambri in the face of mounting unrest. Pressured in skirmishes, Drusus retreated. The Sugambri's head-on attack resulted in a repulse and the establishment of Roman bastions.

■ TEUTOBERG FOREST, 9 CE

(ALL DATES HENCE CE UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED) The battle of Teutoberg Forest was Rome's worst military debacle of the 1st century CE, involving the annihilation of P. Quinctilius Varus and his three legions (some 20,000 men) by Arminius and the German Cherusci. Despite considerable earlier successes, the 'Varian Disaster' drove Augustus to abandon all thoughts of extending Rome's influence across the Rhine.



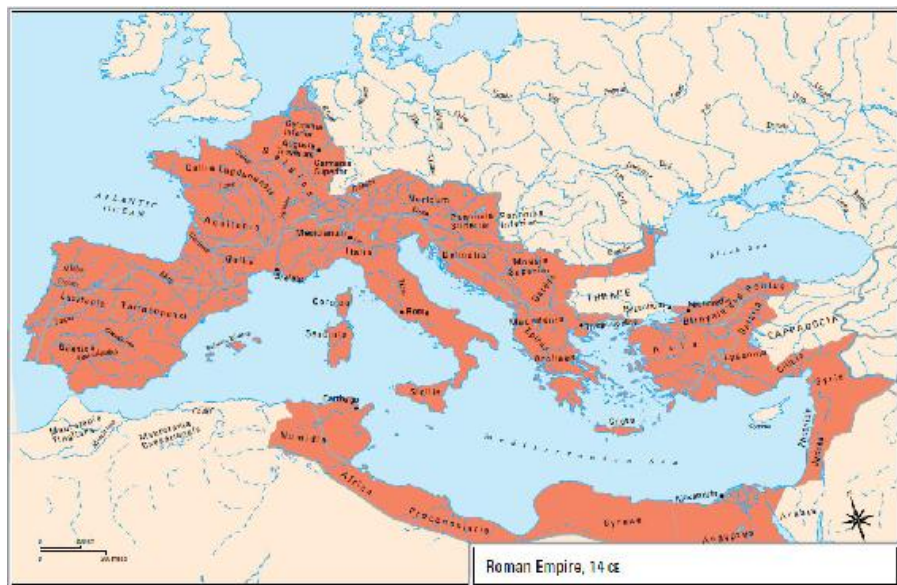
Earlier expeditions by Augustus's stepsons Tiberius and Drusus had penetrated deep into German territory and defeated such federations and concentrations of German resistance as had risen in their path. In the course of such activity Arminius himself had enlisted as a Roman ally and was awarded equestrian rank for his service in Augustus's nascent 'province' of Germany. Varus as imperial governor provoked rebellion upon his arrival with premature efforts to impose taxation and Roman jurisprudence upon the trans-Rhenish population. Arminius took advantage of the resulting surge of quiet anger to employ his knowledge of Roman strategy and tactics against his instructors. Arminius and Segimerus, another German, were regular

guests at Varus's table while the governor parceled out his forces throughout his assigned territory. Having camped that summer on the Weser river, Varus moved back towards the Rhine in early Autumn with the XVII, XVIII and XIX Legions.

Varus had his troops in column when the blow fell, under cover of a series of violent rainstorms that would hit the area over the next four days. The onslaught began with superior concentrations of Germans slaughtering the Romans on more distant stations, then concentrating against Varus and his main army on ground where their numbers could be concealed from the Romans, who had a hard time communicating with their commanders and each other. German attacks began all along the line of march, with individual Roman units surrounded and destroyed without reinforcement from the rest of the column. The Romans had burdened themselves with families and a large supply train, such booty drawing still more Germans to the ongoing slaughter. At the evening of the first day of battle, Varus constructed a fortified camp and burned his wagon train, leaving the Romans surrounded by both the forest and ever-increasing numbers of Germans. On the second day, Varus and his forces struck out back through the woods towards Roman territory, that day and the next, the Romans enjoying some success against the Germans in open patches, but suffering still further casualties and hampered movement each time they re-entered the denser groves as the driving rain continued to obstruct communications and movement.

By the fourth day, Roman archery and equipment were too sodden to be of any use in the fighting, and the rain and Germans continued to pour in. At the news that Varus and his officers had committed suicide for fear of capture, resistance by the ranks collapsed, leaving Arminius and his allies to complete the slaughter and the plunder of the remaining Romans.

At the news, the Emperor Augustus suffered a nervous breakdown while surviving Roman outposts on the eastern side of the Rhine found themselves under still further attack. Panic spread as far as Italy, but German unity fractured under the lure of plundering the emptied Roman positions and over tribal antagonisms. Tiberius shifted the Roman army in Gaul into a position to prevent German crossings, while subsequent Roman expeditions would reach the battlefield, bury the remains of the dead, and with great difficulty retrieve the captured legionary standards, their loss a very great disgrace to Roman arms. Some survivors of Rome's efforts to extend the empire across the Rhine were ransomed from the Germans years later.



■ WESER RIVER, 16

At Idistaviso near the banks of the Weser river, Germanicus, 28,000 legionaries, 30,000 allies and 6000 cavalry brought Arminius and 40–50,000 Cherusci and other Germans to battle. Arminius coordinated a charge directly into the Roman centre, which resulted in the collapse of his own middle and his flight during the slaughter of many of his countrymen by Roman cavalry moving around the German flanks. Germanicus withdrew in good order to the Rhine.

■ RHANDEIA, 62

L. Caesennius Paetus and his force marched boldly into Armenia where the Parthian king Vologeses promptly surrounded them and forced the unit's surrender. Rome secured their release by recognizing Armenia as a Parthian client state.

■ BETH HORON, 66

This saw the defeat of Cestius Gallus and 30,000 legionaries by the Zealots. Cestius abandoned his effort to take Jerusalem, and while retreating lost his baggage train, suffering heavy casualties when the Zealots broke his line and rear.

■ LOCUS CASTORUM, 69

Emperor Otho moved north to resist the Rhenish armies, who had proclaimed their commander Vitellius emperor. Caecina's detachment coming down from the Swiss passes fell back from Otho's army's unexpected effort to hold the Po here.

■ FIRST BEDRIACUM, 69

Lightning marches by the Rhenish armies over the French and Swiss Alps caught Otho's army unprepared to engage them in northern Italy before the commanders Valens and Caecina successfully united their

forces after an abortive attack upon Placentia. Otho made his headquarters here, his staff urging him to await the arrival of loyal forces from Dalmatia, Moesia and Pannonia. Instead, having allowed his foes to consolidate, Otho sent most of his army against the Vitellians, waiting on the other side of Po among scattered vineyards. Casualties were heavy, with Otho's outnumbered troops doing well until Vitellian Batavian auxiliaries attacked the loyalist army's flank, forcing a retreat to their camp. Trapped on the far side of the Po from the rest of Otho's army, the beaten force defected to Vitellius. Hearing the news, Otho ended the civil war by committing suicide.

■ SECOND BEDRIACUM, 69

Vitellius's forces tried to hold the Po River against the arrival of the Eastern armies, who had proclaimed their commander Vespasian emperor. Antonius Primus brought 50,000 men against Vitellius's larger forces, prevailing by superior generalship.

■ JERUSALEM, 70

Jerusalem was stormed by the future emperor Titus during the Jewish Revolt after 66. Some 24,000 quarreling Zealots under Simon Bar Giora resisted 35,000 Romans and auxiliaries. As the Roman army approached, the feuding rebels drew together and did what they could to augment the city's already strong defences, consisting of two outer rings of walls on the city's plateau, and the citadels of the Antonia and the Temple. Jewish raiders almost killed Titus as he reconnoitred before his attack. Resistance to the Romans' ramps, walls and towers was heavy, employing artillery captured from the garrison. The repulse of the Romans at the final 'First Wall' prompted Titus to surround the entire city with a stockade. The final Roman assault crushed the defenders of the Temple, and the surviving zealots were scattering. Bar Giora was captured and subsequently executed.

■ TREVES, 71

This uprising by the Batavi was initially successful, with two Roman legions massacred. The end of the Romano-Jewish war allowed an overwhelmingly large Roman army to be deployed, forcing the Batavi to sue for peace.

■ MASADA, 73

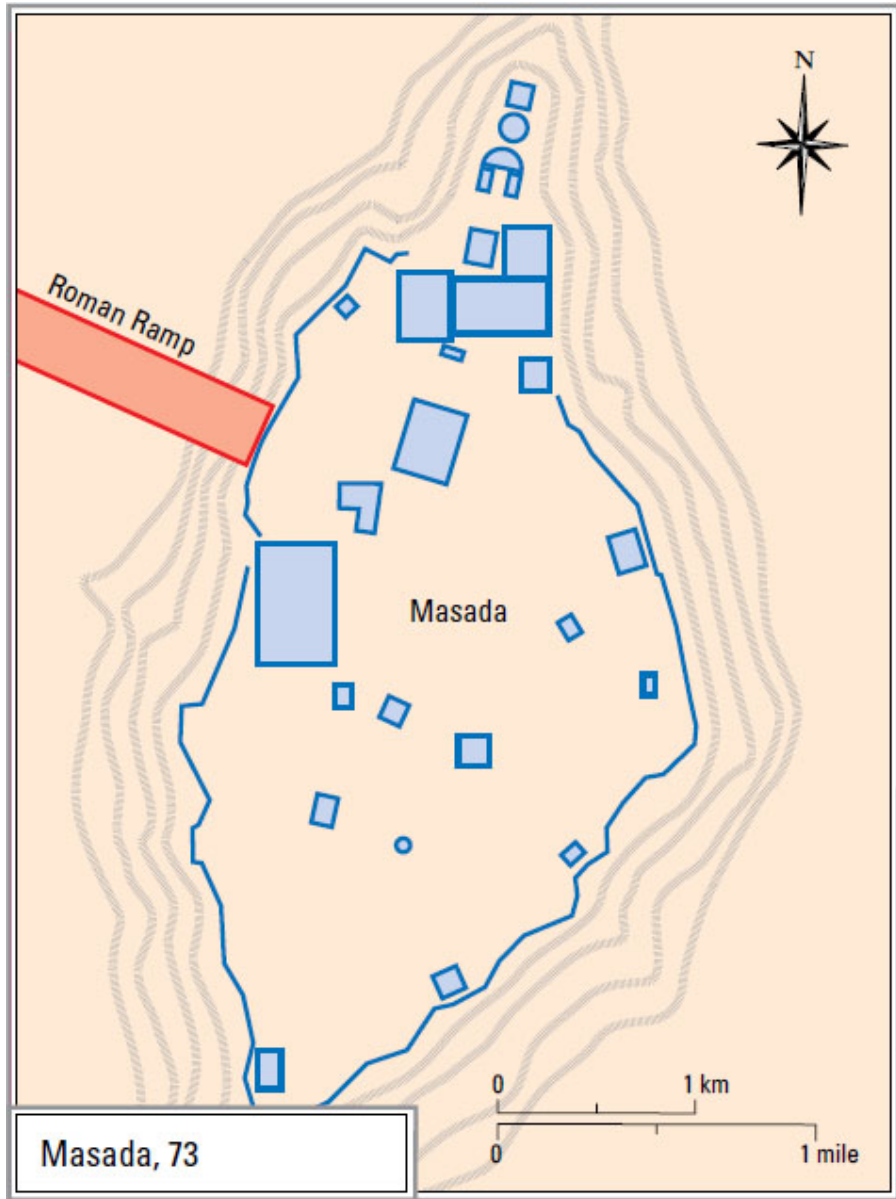
This battle was the culminating event of the most famous of the Jewish revolts, in which Flavius Silva and 7000 troops from the X Legion surrounded and besieged Herod's palace-fortress on the banks of the Dead Sea, forcing the suicide of Jewish leader Eleazar Ben Y'ir and some 1000 followers.

Jewish forces rebelling against Roman control of their homeland had found considerable encouragement from the victory at Beth Horon and the failure of the Roman Empire, paralyzed by the fall of

the Julio-Claudian dynasty, to chastise their insurrection. The end of the civil war brought a crushing Roman response and the nearly complete pacification of Judea.

Eleazar and his faction, called 'Assassins' by other sects, had continued destructive raids against the Romans even after the fall of Jerusalem and of Herodium and Machaerus, their two other fortresses. Masada had been built by Herod the Great as his own final refuge on a peak 450m above the surrounding territory. The fortress contained an elaborate water system and considerable stores of supplies, those features and its difficulty of access making the position impregnable, in most estimations. Flavius's command, however, had become a specialized siege unit, demonstrating its skills in three previous successful sieges.

A wall completely surrounded the edge of the plateau, with towers guarding the gate and other important sections of the defences. Silva began the siege with the classic Roman tactic of circumvallation. Large numbers of recently enslaved Jews joined the Romans in the construction of eight fortified camps linked by a stockade, preventing the Zealots from slipping away and provisions from being smuggled in. Silva secured his own supply line with long caravans of still more enslaved Jews bringing in provisions and potable water.



The Romans next began construction of a siege ramp by which they could move artillery and a battering ram up against the fortress. The engineers augmented a neighbouring height with earth and crushed stone to create an enormous siege ramp, upon which they laid a course of masoned stone to achieve strength and the required height of 100m to allow them to take the walls and gates under artillery fire. The ramp's construction began that autumn and finished in spring.

There was not much the Zealots could do in response, except for delivering harassing archery and preparing a section of wood-beam wall in front of the burgeoning ramp, covered with earth in an effort

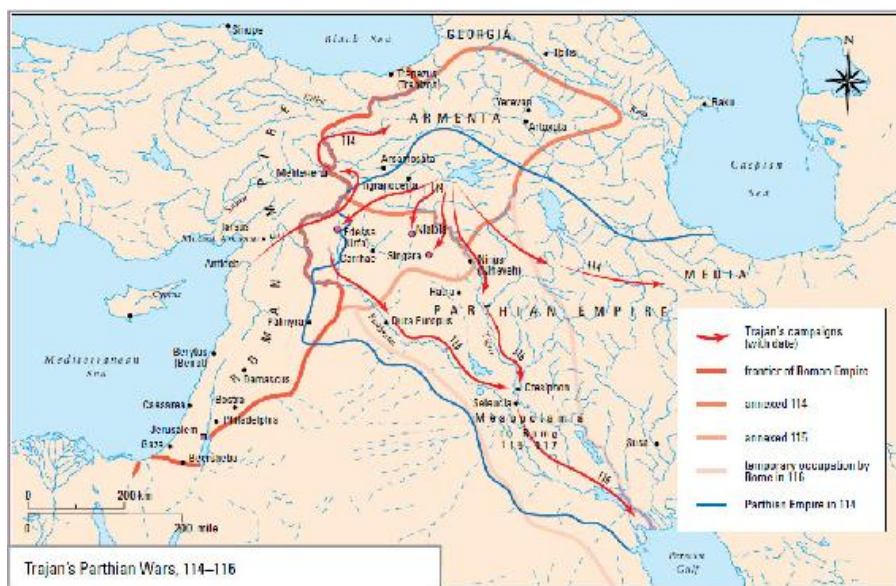
at fire-proofing the construction. Upon the completion of the ramp, the Romans sent a siege tower some 30m high up the ramp, with iron plates and smaller artillery protecting the machine from the Zealots' fire and incendiary missiles.

When the tower reached Herod's entrance, the Romans employed the massive bronze-tipped ram inside the device against the gate and beams behind it. The impacts of the ram served to shake the surrounding earth down inside the bulwark, making it more solid, but also rendering it vulnerable to fire, which the Romans soon employed. Shifting wind drove the flames back against the iron plates of the tower, but a second shift engulfed the beams in a roaring inferno.

The Romans withdrew that night to let the flames burn, manning their wall in anticipation of a break-out. What they found in the morning were the bodies of the defenders, who had slain each other and themselves along with their families.

■ TAPAE, 87

Responding to a Dacian incursion into Moesia, Roman forces invaded Dacia but were heavily defeated at Tapae. A renewed offensive the following year resulted in another battle at Tapae, this time a Roman victory.



■ TAPAE, 101

A Roman invasion of Dacia was met at Tapae. After inconclusive fighting, the Dacians interpreted a storm as a divine omen and broke off the action. The Roman army then went into winter quarters.

■ ADAMCLISI, 102

Before the Romans could resume their offensive into Dacia, the Dacians attacked Moesia. After a major battle at Adamclisi, the

Dacians withdrew to counter Roman advances into their home territory, but were defeated at Sarmisegetusa.

■ SARMISEGETUSA, 106

Having defeated the Dacians in 102, the Roman army enforced the partial dismantling of Sarmisegetusa's walls before retiring. By 106 the walls had been rebuilt and the Dacian king, Decebalus, did not observe the peace terms imposed upon him. A renewed Roman offensive, led by Emperor Trajan, was launched, using parallel routes which were already garrisoned by Roman forces as part of the 102 settlement. Brushing aside what resistance developed, Trajan's main force laid siege to Sarmisegetusa while detachments attacked other Dacian settlements to prevent a relief from being mounted. After the initial Roman assault failed, deliberate siege operations commenced, the Romans surrounding the city with fortified positions. The defenders of Sarmisegetusa were gradually worn down until Roman forces were able to enter the city. Decebalus escaped from the city with some troops but was chased down.

■ POROLISSUM, 106

After their defeat at Sarmisegetusa, the remaining Dacian forces were pursued and brought to action at Porolissum. A legion camp was set up at this location, which then became the capital of the province when it was annexed.

■ CTESIPHON, 165

After beating off Parthian attempts to take control of Armenia, Roman forces entered Parthia itself and besieged the capital, Ctesiphon. The city was taken but was returned to Parthia as part of the subsequent peace settlement.

■ CYZICUS, 193

The Praetorian Guard, formed to protect the Roman Emperor, had become such a power in Roman politics that in 193 its members were able to murder Emperor Pertinax and offer the throne to the highest bidder. Several claimants emerged, of whom Didius Julianus was placed on the throne. Septimus Severus first deposed and beheaded Didius Julianus, then marched east to Asia Minor, defeating rival claimant Pescennius Niger at Cxyzicus.

■ NICAIA, 193

Defeated at Cxyzicus, Pescennius Niger retreated to Nicaea where a second encounter took place. Niger's outnumbered forces were defeated, but managed to conduct a retreat into the Taurus Mountains where Severus could not immediately follow.

■ ISSUS, 194

The final encounter between the forces of Septimus Severus and Pescennius Niger took place at Issus in 194. Although the issue

remained in doubt for some time during the battle, Severus's legions outfought their opponents; Pescennius Niger was killed whilst fleeing.

■ LUGDUNUM, 197

Rival claimant Clodius Albinus initially allied himself with Severus, but later came into conflict with the Roman. Albinus's army, claimed to include 150,000 troops, was decisively defeated at Lugdunum. Severus thus emerged as undisputed Roman emperor.

■ CTESIPHON, 198

Roman forces succeeded in reaching Ctesiphon despite resistance from the declining Parthians. Once again the city was taken and Parthia was forced to make further concessions to Rome, hastening the end of Parthian power.

Romano-British Wars 55 BCE–410 CE

■ FIRST INVASION, 55 BCE

Julius Caesar undertook a number of endeavours during his wars in Gaul which were far beyond the remit of his mission, such as the bridging of the Rhine and two expeditions against Britain. The first of these, in 55 BCE, was probably an opportunistic foray rather than a full-scale invasion and was driven off, though it further increased Caesar's reputation in Roman politics.

After a personal reconnaissance of the shore, Caesar crossed the English Channel with two legions, with a force of cavalry to be brought across soon afterwards. Caesar's legions made an opposed landing against a force of Briton chariots and infantry, which was eventually pushed back enough to create a beachhead. In the face of repeated attacks, and unable to get the cavalry ashore due to bad weather in the Channel, Caesar decided to retire to Gaul.

■ SECOND INVASION, 54 BCE

Caesar's second invasion of Britain was carefully planned and involved around 27,000 troops; five legions plus cavalry support. This time the Britons felt unable to oppose the landing directly and mustered their forces inland. Caesar went on the offensive immediately, clearing the area around his beachhead, but was then forced to delay further action in order to repair damage to his fleet.

Defeated in open battle, the Britons attempted to wear down Caesar's force with skirmishing and guerrilla tactics, and made a stand at the Thames. Caesar's legions forced a crossing and soon afterwards an alliance was made with some of the Briton tribes. After further fighting the Britons agreed to pay tribute to Rome, and Caesar returned to his campaign in Gaul. It is highly unlikely that the tribute was paid, as Caesar could not spare any troops as garrisons or to enforce the treaty.

■ THIRD INVASION, 43

Taking advantage of conflict among the Britons, about 40,000 Roman troops were landed on the south coast in 43 CE. Within the year, 11 southeastern tribes had surrendered and a capital was set up at Camlodunum.

■ MEDWAY, 43

The primary leader of Briton resistance to the Roman invasion was Caratacus, who chose to contest a crossing of the River Medway. An aggressive Roman crossing caught the Britons unawares, but after a day of heavy fighting the situation was still in doubt. A renewed offensive on the second day inflicted a heavy defeat and the Britons

fell back to the Thames. The exact location of this battle is open to much debate.



■ CAER CARADOC, 51

Defeated in the south-east, Caratacus retired to Wales and continued to resist Roman expansion in Britain. As the Romans pushed west Caratacus fought a final defensive battle at Caer Caradoc, but was outfought by the better-armed legions.

Revolt of Boudicca 60/61

■ CAMULODUNUM (COLCHESTER), 60/61

Mistreated by Roman officials, Queen Boudicca of the Iceni tribe took advantage of the absence of Roman legions, which were campaigning in the west of Britain. Her first target was Camulodunum, which was virtually undefended.

■ VERULAMIUM (ST ALBANS), 60/61

After overrunning Camulodunum, Boudicca's forces overwhelmed a single legion sent to stop them and advanced on Londinium, sacking it, and thence to Verulamium. Unable to defend the town, Roman forces withdrew and Verulamium was sacked unopposed.

■ WATLING STREET, 60/61

Preserving what little remained of his force after the destruction of Legio IX Hispana, Roman governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus did not oppose the Iceni in their destruction of Londinium and Verulamium, but once reinforced he sought a decisive battle. Although heavily outnumbered, the Roman legions were far more disciplined than their Iceni opponents and were more efficiently equipped.

The actual location of the battle is open to some speculation. It probably occurred on the route that became known as Watling Street, somewhere between Londinium and Viroconium. The Romans prepared a defensive position and awaited attack, trusting to difficult terrain on the flanks to somewhat offset Iceni numbers.

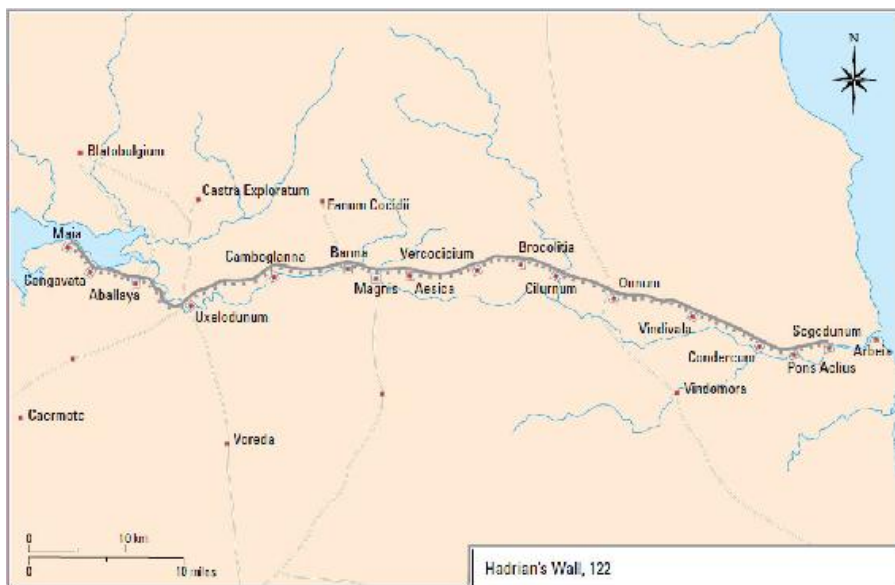
The Iceni made a straightforward frontal charge, which was met by the usual Roman tactic of hurling pila spears to disrupt the advance. This was followed up by a counter-charge against the disorganized Britons. Although more numerous, the Briton force did not have the sustained fighting power of the Romans. Tired legionaries were constantly replaced in the front lines by fresh men in a well-drilled cycle. Meanwhile the Briton warriors were unable to obtain respite due to the press of men at their backs.

The Iceni force was gradually outfought by the legions in a protracted action that resulted in massive Briton casualties. As the line advanced, space was created for the Roman cavalry to attack the Iceni flanks, contributing to an eventual collapse. Many Iceni warriors were unable to escape due to their own baggage train encamped at the rear of the army and were slaughtered. Boudicca herself is said to have committed suicide rather than face capture, robbing the revolt of leadership and allowing Rome to reclaim south-east Britain.



Boudican Revolt, 60

This map illustrates the Boudican Revolt in 60 AD. The Roman province of **BRITANNIA** is shown in red, while the **CHIEFTAIN KINGDOM OF PRASUTAGUS** and **CHIEFTAIN KINGDOM OF CASSIOLANUS** are in orange. The **GAULS** are to the north. Roman legions are marked with red squares: IX Legion (Durovernum), VI Legion (Eborac), XX Legion (Gloucestria), XX Legion (Gloucestria), IX Legion (Durovernum), and VI Legion (Eborac). The path of the rebellion is shown with red arrows, starting from the north, passing through Durovernum, and ending at Londinium. Key locations include Durovernum, Eborac, Gloucestria, Londinium, and the sites of battles marked with 'X'. A legend in the bottom left corner defines the symbols: IX Legion (Base of Roman Legions), X (Site of battles), red square (Towns destroyed), and red area (Area under Roman control). A scale bar at the bottom right indicates 0 to 100 km.



Although the Brigantes tribe had formerly been allies of Rome, from 69 CE onwards attempts were made to conquer them. A Brigantes force was defeated at Stanwick, which may have been the centre of their opposition to Rome.

Appointed as governor of Britain, Gnaeus Julius Agricola found the previously subdued tribes of Wales in rebellion. After subduing the Ordovices of northern Wales he bought all territory as far as Anglesey back under Roman control.

■ MONS GRAUPIUS, 84

Agricola made a foray into Caledonia in 79, and in 84 he launched a full-scale invasion. Threatening Caledonian grain supplies, he was able to force a battle at a place whose location remains vague. Tacitus' auxiliary infantry advanced against the Caledones, who were drawn up on high ground. After driving in the front enemy ranks the auxiliaries were outflanked by Caledonian reserves, who were then flanked by Roman cavalry.

■ PICTISH RAIDS, c.105

Although much of Caledonia remained beyond Roman control, the lowlands were garrisoned and increasingly Romanized. Around 105, Pictish raids into the region coincided with a draw-off of troops to deal with crises elsewhere.

■ BRIGANTES REVOLT, 155–57

The Brigantes revolted against Roman rule and destroyed the fort at Olicana, but were subdued and placed under direct military rule for a period. Some tribes broke away at this time and became Roman allies.

■ BREACH OF HADRIAN'S WALL, 180

After retreating from the Antonine Wall in 163, Roman forces rebuilt the fortifications of Hadrian's Wall. This did not prevent a large-scale penetration of the wall by northern tribes, which was met by Roman punitive raids.



■ SOUTHAMPTON, 293

After retaking Gaul for the Western Empire, a Roman force landed near Southampton. There they engaged and defeated forces of Allectus, who had taken control of the country after assassinating the

self-proclaimed Western Emperor Mausaeus Carausius.

■ BARBARIAN RAIDS, 4TH CENTURY

After the withdrawal of Roman troops to face the Goths, Romano-Britons elected their own emperors to lead the defence against raids from Ireland and the Continent. By 410 Britain had explicitly been abandoned by Rome.

Chinese Three Kingdom Wars 220–80

■ XIAOTING, 222

The warlord Liu Bei declared himself emperor of Shu Han and invaded Eastern Wu, using the Yangtze river for transport. A piecemeal response by Eastern Wu was easily defeated, until the forces of Eastern Wu abandoned attempts to intercept the invasion and retreated to concentrate for a decisive battle.

Bypassing the few places strongly held by Eastern Wu, Liu Bei's forces reached the city of Xiaoting but were unable to capture it, despite some local successes. Liu Bei's forces were operating at the end of a long supply line and were gradually worn down by the defenders, who remained in their fortified positions and refused to be drawn into open battle. Eastern Wu finally launched a counter-attack in the height of summer, driving Liu Bei's army from its camps by setting fire to them. Liu Bei was killed in the retreat.

■ WUZHANG PLAINS, 224

The last Northern Expedition led by the Shu Han chancellor Zhuge Liang became a lengthy stalemate, during which Zhuge Liang fell ill and died. His army then retreated to Shu Han territory.

■ XINGSHI, 224

A large Cao Wei force invaded Shu Han territory, which required passing through difficult terrain. The route chosen was short but rugged and lacked water sources, imposing a severe logistical problem. The outnumbered Shu Han forces took advantage of the terrain to block the advance at Mount Xingshi. Deception operations were undertaken, convincing the Wei commanders that they faced a much greater force.

Large numbers of pack animals and human bearers died of thirst, along with some of the troops, before the Wei force began to withdraw. It was then attacked by Shu Han reinforcements which attempted to cut off the line of retreat. Although the Wei army was able to extricate itself from the trap, it suffered huge casualties from thirst as well as enemy action. This defeat had far-reaching consequences for internal and external politics within Cao Wei.

■ XINCHENG, 227–228

Meng Da, administrator of Xincheng, offered to betray his allegiance to Wei and join the forces of Shu Han if they moved against Wei. His intentions were discovered, causing him to assemble an army hurriedly. However, Wei's general deceived Meng Da into thinking that the information had been disregarded as part of an external plot. Meng Da became complacent and was easily defeated by the army of

Wei, pre-empting his rebellion.

■ TIANSHUI, 228

Shu Han forces advanced against the city of Chang'an, triggering a series of revolts against Cao Wei. Tianshui opened its gates to the Shu Han forces, but these were forced to retreat by defeats elsewhere.

■ JIETING, 228

The First Northern Expedition launched by Shu Han forces achieved considerable success before it was halted at Jieting. Unable to use the region as a supply base, the expedition was forced to retreat.

■ SHITING, 228

Duped by a false promise that an Eastern Wu general would defect to their side, forces of Cao Wei were drawn into an ambush. Retreating into a fortified camp at Shiting, they were then attacked at night and part of the force was dispersed. Nevertheless, the Wei commander decided to launch an attack and was decisively defeated. Wu forces then pursued those of Wei and inflicted further casualties.



■ CHENCANG, 229

The Second Northern Expedition of Shu Han reached Chencang and found it heavily defended. Despite having a large siege train the siege was unsuccessful and the Shu Han were forced to withdraw as supplies ran out.

■ QUCHENG, 249

Cao Wei forces attempted to eliminate Shu Han fortifications in the Qu mountains, resulting in a counter-offensive and an inconclusive series of actions. A deteriorating supply situation caused the Shu Han to retreat.

■ DIDAO, 255

Rashly attempting to intercept invading Shu Han forces, the Cao Wei army was defeated and then besieged in Didao. The Shu Han failed to take the city and were forced to retreat by enemy reinforcements.

■ DUANGU, 256

Shu Han forces advanced against the city of Qishan but found it heavily defended. The Han army was decisively defeated at Duangu by a Cao Wei force, after reinforcements failed to reach the Han in time.

Rome's Germanic and Barbarian Wars 250–500

■ PHILIPPOLIS, 250

A Goth force under King Cniva was driven away from Nicopolis by a Roman army commanded by Emperor Decius, which then followed the Goths. Cniva turned on his pursuers and routed them before successfully besieging Philippopolis.

■ ABRITTUS, 251

As the Goths marched home from sacking Philippopolis, they were caught by Emperor Decius' army, which had been reinforced after its recent defeat. The Goths' king, Cniva, gave battle on ground of his own choosing, concealing part of his force from the Romans. According to some accounts of the battle, Emperor Decius' son was killed in the early stages. The initial fighting nevertheless went in favour of the Romans at first.

As the Goth line collapsed, the Romans attempted to pursue them from the battlefield but instead were led into a swamp. Here, the concealed Goth force launched a counter-attack that inflicted great slaughter on the Romans. Emperor Decius (and possibly his son) were killed in the fighting. Rome was forced to accept an unfavourable treaty which may have included tribute paid to the Goths.

■ GOTHIC SEA RAIDS, 253–268

Despite the terms of a treaty requiring them to respect Roman territory, the Goths raided the Black Sea and Balkan coasts. Weakened by a long plague, the Roman Empire was unable find an effective counter.

■ MEDIOLANUM, 259

Facing an incursion into Italy by the Alemanni, the Roman senate threw together a militia force which caused the tribesmen to retire. They were intercepted at Mediolanum by a Roman army and defeated with heavy casualties.

■ LAKE BENACUS, 268

A very large Alemanni force remained at large in Italy despite the victory at Mediolanum, posing a severe threat to Rome itself. Relatively few troops were available to Emperor Claudius II due to the needs of campaigns in the east against the Goths. Thus the emperor attempted to negotiate an Alemanni withdrawal. When the talks broke down, the much smaller Roman force attacked and inflicted a decisive defeat.

■ NAISSUS, 269

As Rome recovered its strength after plague had deprived its legions of

manpower, the Goths continued their raids and incursions into Roman territory. They were met by a Roman army under Emperor Gallienus, who managed to inflict defeats upon the invaders. Further casualties were caused by the Roman fleet, which attempted to prevent the Goths from raiding along the coast.

Gallienus was assassinated, probably in 268, and was succeeded by Claudius II. There is some doubt as to which emperor was reigning at the time of the battle at Naissus, though it seems likely that it was Claudius. The emperor was also distracted for a time by an incursion of the Alemanni into Italy. After defeating this invasion, he marched east in time to meet a huge Gothic force which was moving into the Balkans.

The Roman fleet did what it could to oppose the invasion, defeating or driving off part of the Gothic fleet, but it was not possible to prevent several cities from being besieged. Some were sacked, others successfully resisted.

Hearing that the Roman emperor was approaching with a large army, the Goths concentrated their forces and met their opponents as the Romans came down from the north. A bloody set-piece battle ensued for a time before the Romans gained an advantage by means of a ruse. Some units feigned a retreat and drew part of the Gothic force into an ambush, causing a general collapse.

Forced to discard their baggage train and many pack animals, the Goths suffered additional casualties from starvation and disease as they retired. The Roman pursuit was so vigorous and inflicted such losses on the Goths that they ceased to be a major threat for some time.

■ PLACENTIA, 271

Defeat at Lake Benacus did not end the Alemanni threat to Rome. Taking advantage of the army's absence on the frontiers, the Alemanni invaded Italy and marched on Placentia. Emperor Aurelian brought his army rapidly from Pannonia to meet the invasion but was ambushed and defeated. With Aurelian's army in retreat the Alemanni then resumed their advance towards Rome, which was virtually undefended and possessed inadequate fortifications.

■ FANO, 271

Recovering from his defeat at Placentia, Emperor Aurelian pursued the Alemanni and defeated them near Fano. The Alemanni were caught with their backs to the River Metaurus; many drowned as they tried to escape.

■ PAVIA, 271

Pursuing the Alemanni from Fano, Emperor Aurelian caught them again at Pavia and was able to block their retreat through the Alpine

passes. The Alemanni force was virtually annihilated, ending the threat to Rome for the time being.

■ CHALONS, 274

From 260 onwards, former Roman possessions in Gaul and the surrounding areas had been part of the Gallic Empire. Already diminished, the Gallic Empire was reintegrated after Emperor Aurelian defeated its forces at Chalons.

■ LINGONES, 298

The city of Lingones, an important economic and administrative centre, was sacked by the Alemanni. They were then defeated and driven off by a Roman army under the command of Emperor Constantius Chlorus.

■ VINDONISSA, 298

Emperor Constantius Chlorus campaigned against the Alemanni along the Rhine frontier, defeating them at Vindonissa and other locations. These victories restored stability to the region at a time when Rome was severely threatened by barbarian incursions.

■ AUTUN, 356

Autun was blockaded by the Alemanni, who were prevented from breaching its inadequate walls by a force of retired veterans who resided in the town. At the approach of a Roman army, the Alemanni retreated.

■ REIMS, 356

After relieving Autun, Julian the Apostate's Roman army advanced directly towards Reims despite a series of ambushes on the road. His force was outflanked by the Alemanni and narrowly avoided a serious defeat.

■ BRUMATH, 356

Most Alemanni war bands fell back before Julian's force, but at Brumath one offered battle. Julian's force enveloped the Alemanni flanks, inflicting a defeat that discouraged other Alemanni bands for a time.

■ SENOË, 356

Julian's army went into winter quarters and was attacked at Senoe. The Alemanni assault was repulsed but Julian lacked the forces to counterattack, so had to remain besieged until the Alemanni ran out of supplies and dispersed.

■ ARGENTORATUM, 357 (STRASBOURG)

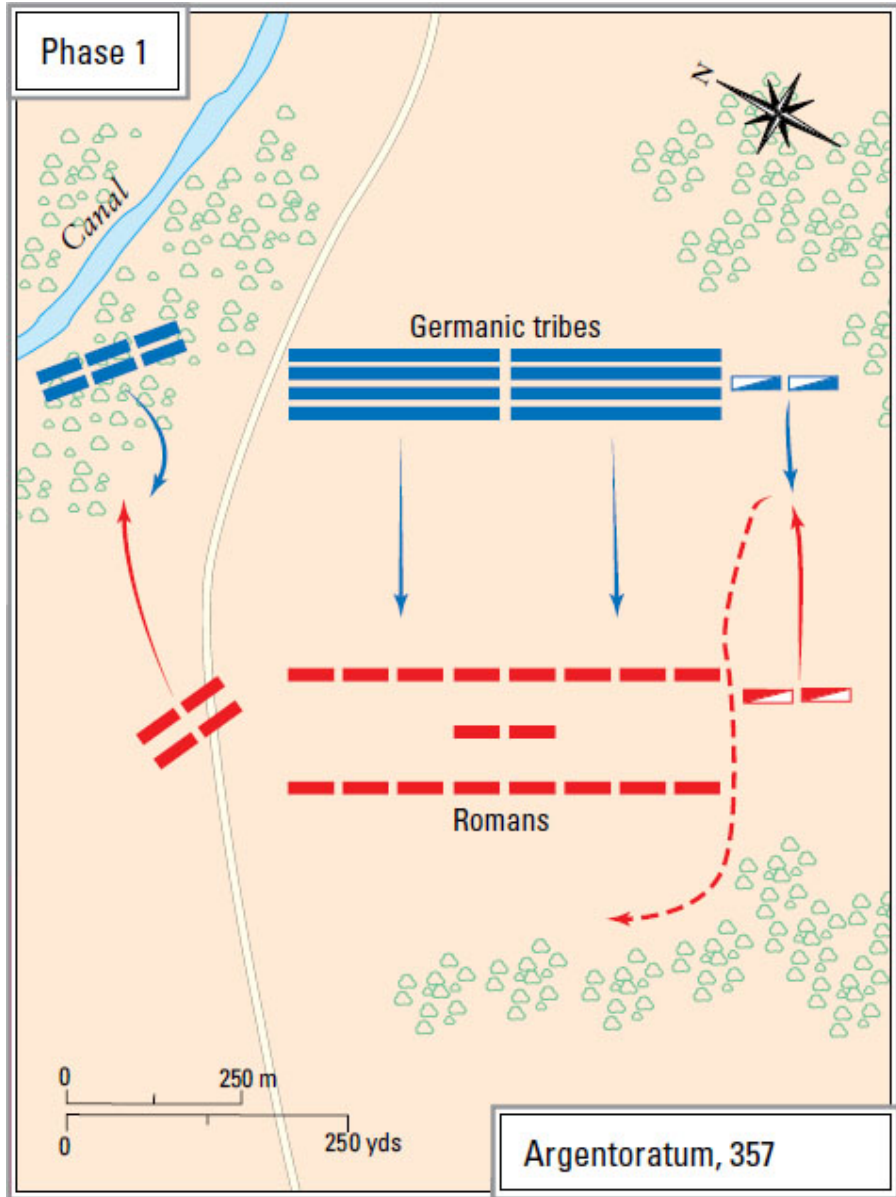
Julian the Apostate was appointed Caesar of the West by the Roman Emperor, Constantius II, and was sent to Gaul where he campaigned against the Alemanni, who had overrun several Roman towns. After a somewhat successful first campaign year Julian was reinforced but was also beset with political problems within his command.

Nevertheless, Julian conducted a successful campaign against the Alemanni who were marauding west of the Rhine, then moved to intercept a large force which was crossing the river. Although outnumbered, Julian gave battle with his cavalry massed on the right flank.

The battle opened with a cavalry clash which was indecisive for a time, before the Roman cavalry suddenly collapsed and began to rout. The infantry maintained their discipline, allowing some of the cavalry to rally, but they played little part in the remainder of the action, other than to keep the Germanic cavalry from attacking the Roman flank.

After a long period of hand-to-hand fighting the Alemanni were able to penetrate the first Roman line and attacked the second, which repelled the assault after hard fighting. This setback, coupled with exhaustion and heavy casualties, caused morale among the Alemanni to fall, and soon their whole force dissolved into rout.

With the river at their backs, many Germanic warriors were unable to escape or were killed with arrows and javelins as they tried to cross. Julian restrained his force from chasing their opponents into the water, instead pulling back to a defensive camp for the night. Julian's force crossed the Rhine thereafter and launched a punitive raid into Alemanni territory. The Romans pulled back once serious resistance materialized, and the Alemanni were granted a temporary peace agreement.



■ CHALONS, 366

After the defeat of Roman forces by the Alemanni, Emperor Valentinian I led a campaign against them. Following victory over the Alemanni at Chalons, Valentinian advanced across the Rhine; he was the last Roman emperor to campaign there.

■ SOLICINIUM, 367

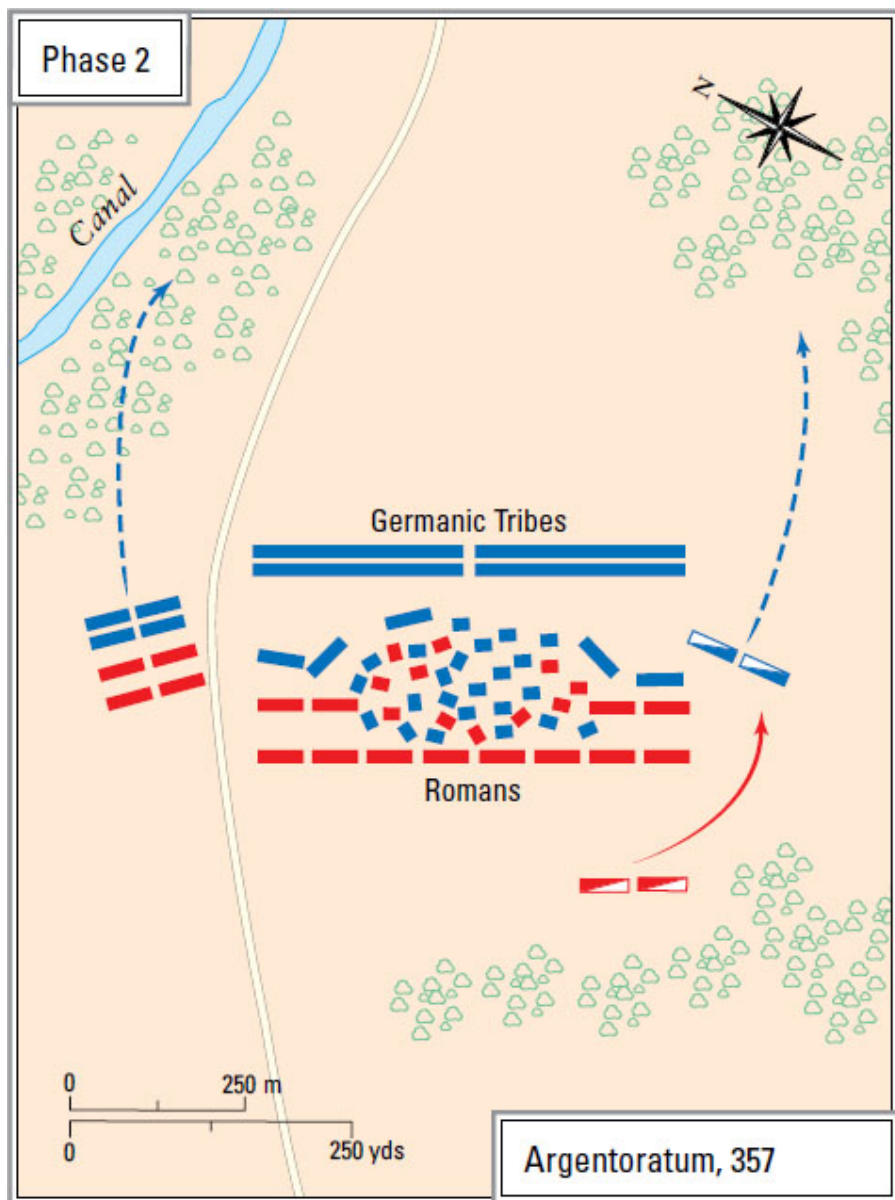
Facing an alliance of Germanic tribes, Roman forces under Emperor Valentinian I launched a vigorous attack which forced the barbarians back to a defensive position on a hill. Heavy losses were suffered by both sides.

■ TANAIIS RIVER, 373

As the Huns moved westwards they pushed into the territory of the Alans, resulting in a clash at the Tanaïs river (the modern Don). Details are sketchy, but the Huns apparently defeated the Alans in the battle.

■ BATTLE OF THE WILLOWS, 377

Rebellious Goths began plundering Roman provinces in search of food. A joint force from the Eastern and Western Empires fought the Goths to a bloody draw in what was the first battle of the Gothic War.



■ ARGENTOVARIA, 378

The Lentienses, part of the Alemanni tribal group, crossed the frozen Rhine to enter Roman territory in search of plunder. They were defeated by Roman forces, and their king killed, at Argentovaria.

■ ADRIANOPLE, 378

Driven by the Hun invasion, large numbers of Goths asked permission to settle in Roman territory; in return they would help defend the frontiers of the Empire. A famine, and Roman indifference to their starvation, forced the Goths into revolt. After initial attempts to put down the rebellion failed, the Goths advanced on Adrianople and launched an unsuccessful assault. Help was promised by the Western Emperor, Gratian, but he was forced to deal with an incursion by Alemanni tribesmen. The Eastern Emperor, Valens, was thus forced to choose between taking on the Goths with only his own forces or waiting for assistance from the west.

Marching from Constantinople, Valens made contact with the Goth army and used his cavalry to track it while his main force moved up. He reached Adrianople and made camp, expecting Western Roman forces to join him before offensive operations began. However, an opportunity arose to attack the Goth army, and Valens decided to make the most of it.

Valens' army somewhat outnumbered the Goths, and was composed of a good mix of legions, auxiliaries and cavalry. Many of the Roman troops were veterans, giving Valens further reasons to be confident. The Goths, for their part, seemed to have a force composed entirely of infantry and archers. They camped in a defensive wagon laager and awaited the Roman approach.

Valens deployed for battle in conventional manner, with infantry in the centre and cavalry forming the flanks. These included heavily armoured cataphracts as well as lighter cavalry. Faced with this threat the Goths adopted a very defensive deployment, using their wagon laager to protect their infantry from cavalry attack.

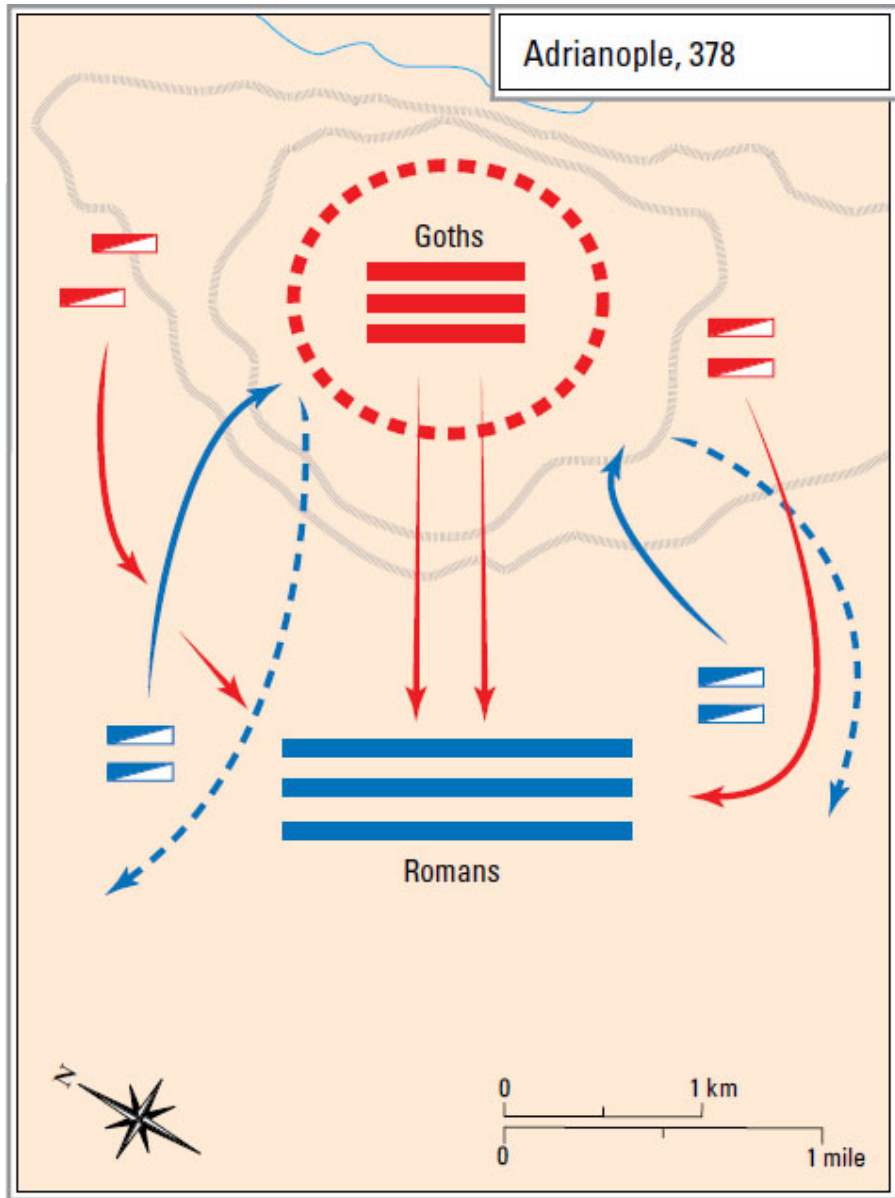
Valens was not aware that the Goths had a large body of cavalry in the area, which had been out foraging. Hoping to buy time for this force to return, the Goths offered a parlay. Valens had already rejected an earlier suggestion of peace negotiations, but now agreed to talk. Fussing over minutiae of protocol regarding who was of sufficient rank to meet with whom bought more time for the Goths, who started brushfires in order to increase the discomfort of Valens' hungry, hot and tired troops.

Before the parlay could finally get underway, cavalry skirmishing escalated into an attack on the Goths' main positions. The Roman cavalry were easily repelled, and at the same time the Gothic cavalry reached the field. It launched an immediate charge at the disorganized

Roman left flank cavalry.

The Roman left flank rapidly gave way, permitting the Gothic cavalry to charge into the infantry in the center. They were rapidly joined by the Gothic infantry, who came out of their laager to engage the Romans from the front. Despite a collapsed flank, the Roman infantry proved extremely resilient and held out against repeated assaults.

Hot, hungry and tired from their long march, the Roman infantry had started the battle at a disadvantage, and as the fighting went on exhaustion took its toll. Units began to falter and then melt away, although some fought a stubborn rearguard action that allowed at least part of the army to escape. When Roman resistance finally collapsed, the Gothic pursuit was extremely vigorous. As much as two-thirds of the Roman army may have been annihilated. Emperor Valens himself was killed in the fighting, although his exact fate is not known for certain.



■ AQUIELA/FRIGIDUS, 394

Attempting to re-unify the Eastern and Western Empires, Eastern Emperor Theodosius marched towards Italy. His army was intercepted near Aquileia by a Western army under the Western Emperor Eugenius. Theodosius sent his barbarian allies into a headlong attack, which was repulsed with heavy losses on both sides. The next day, reinforced by deserters from the Western army, Theodosius attacked again. His victory permitted a temporary re-unification of the Roman Empire.

■ MILAN, 402

The Visigoths under Alaric I advanced into Italy, forcing Emperor Honorius to take refuge behind the fortifications of his capital at Milan. Meanwhile, Roman forces were hurriedly gathered from the frontiers to oppose the invasion.

■ ASTA, 402

As the Visigoths closed in on Milan, Emperor Honorius tried to move to Arles but was driven into Asta where they were besieged. Roman reinforcements fought their way into the city to assist the defenders.

■ POLLENTIA, 402

The arrival of a Roman army caused the Visigoths besieging Emperor Honorius in Asta to withdraw to Pollentia. There, they were attacked by surprise during their Easter Day ceremonies. The attack was led by Alans, allied to Rome, who were eventually driven off. In the ensuing bloody hand-to-hand struggle, Roman troops gradually outfought the Visigoths, who managed to withdraw at the price of leaving their baggage and loot behind.

■ VERONA, 403

Defeated at Pollentia, the Visigoths agreed to withdraw from Italy but instead besieged Verona. They were attacked there by a Roman army and forced to withdraw eastwards, out of Italy and towards Illyricum.

■ SIEGE OF FLORENCE, 406

Florence was besieged by Gothic tribesmen under Radagaisus, and brought to the point of surrender. A Roman army under Stilicho then surrounded the Goths and besieged them in turn, starving them into surrender.

■ ROME, 410

Suspicion that their able commander Stilicho, who had defeated King Alaric of the Visigoths, was now in league with his former enemy prompted the Roman authorities to execute the general. This caused disaffected elements of the Roman army to go over to Alaric's side.

In 408 the Visigothic army reached Rome and placed the city under siege. With no relief force available in time, the city was starved into surrender and forced to pay a large ransom. Alaric made demands of Emperor Honorius, including a homeland for his people and recognition for himself as a Roman official.

Honorius would not grant these concessions, so Alaric returned to Rome in 409. He took control of Rome's port, Ostia, and destroyed its granaries. Again the city was forced to surrender, and Alaric demanded that the Senate depose Emperor Honorius and replace him with Priscus Attalus. Alaric's army then marched on Ravenna to enforce this decision upon Honorius. This was thwarted by the arrival of troops from the Eastern Empire to reinforce Ravenna.

A dispute between Alaric and Attalus, and failure to reach a

settlement with Honorius, caused Alaric to depose Attalus and march back to Rome, laying siege a third time. The gates were opened to Alaric's army by sympathizers within the city, which was then sacked for the first time in 800 years. Rome was not at this time the capital of the empire; government had previously been relocated to Milan and then Ravenna. Alaric died soon after the fall of Rome, and after a plan to relocate to Africa came to naught the Visigoths instead moved to Gaul in search of a new home.

■ VIENNE, 411

Having originally supported Constantine III's revolt against Emperor Honorius, Gerontius turned against him. He besieged Constantine's forces in Vienne. After capturing the city along with Constantine's son Constans, Gerontius then marched against Constantine himself.



■ ARELATE, 411

While Gerontius was besieging Constantine III in Arelate, a Roman army loyal to Emperor Honorius arrived, causing Gerontius to retreat into Spain. The siege was continued by the loyalists, who captured and executed Constantine III.

■ ARELATE, 427–430

A Visigoth force besieging Arelate (Arles) was driven off by a Roman army under the command of Flavius Aëtius. A renewed attack in 430 was again defeated, leading to a peace treaty between Rome and the Goths.

■ HIPPO, 430–431

Bonifacius, the Roman governor in Africa, hired Vandal mercenaries to his side, but then dismissed them. They revolted in response, and besieged him in Hippo Regius for over a year. A Roman army rescued

the defenders but was driven to Carthage by the Vandals.

■ ARELATE AND NARBO, 436–437

Theodoric I of the Visigoths took advantage of Rome's internal troubles, attacking Narbo and Arelate. This move was countered by Roman forces and Hun mercenaries, though the siege of Narbo was not broken until 437.

■ ATILA INVADES EASTERN EMPIRE, 441

After an unsuccessful campaign into Persia, the Huns returned to the Danube region. Roman garrison strengths had been reduced to provide troops for service elsewhere, leaving Illyricum and the Balkans open to attack.

■ UTUS, 447

A Roman army including imperial troops and local forces met the Huns at the River Utus. The Huns were eventually victorious, but their heavy losses may have caused an abandonment of plans to attack Constantinople; instead the Huns pillaged much of the Balkans. A peace treaty was agreed a year later, creating a demilitarized buffer zone around the Danube.

■ ATILA CROSSES THE RHINE, 451

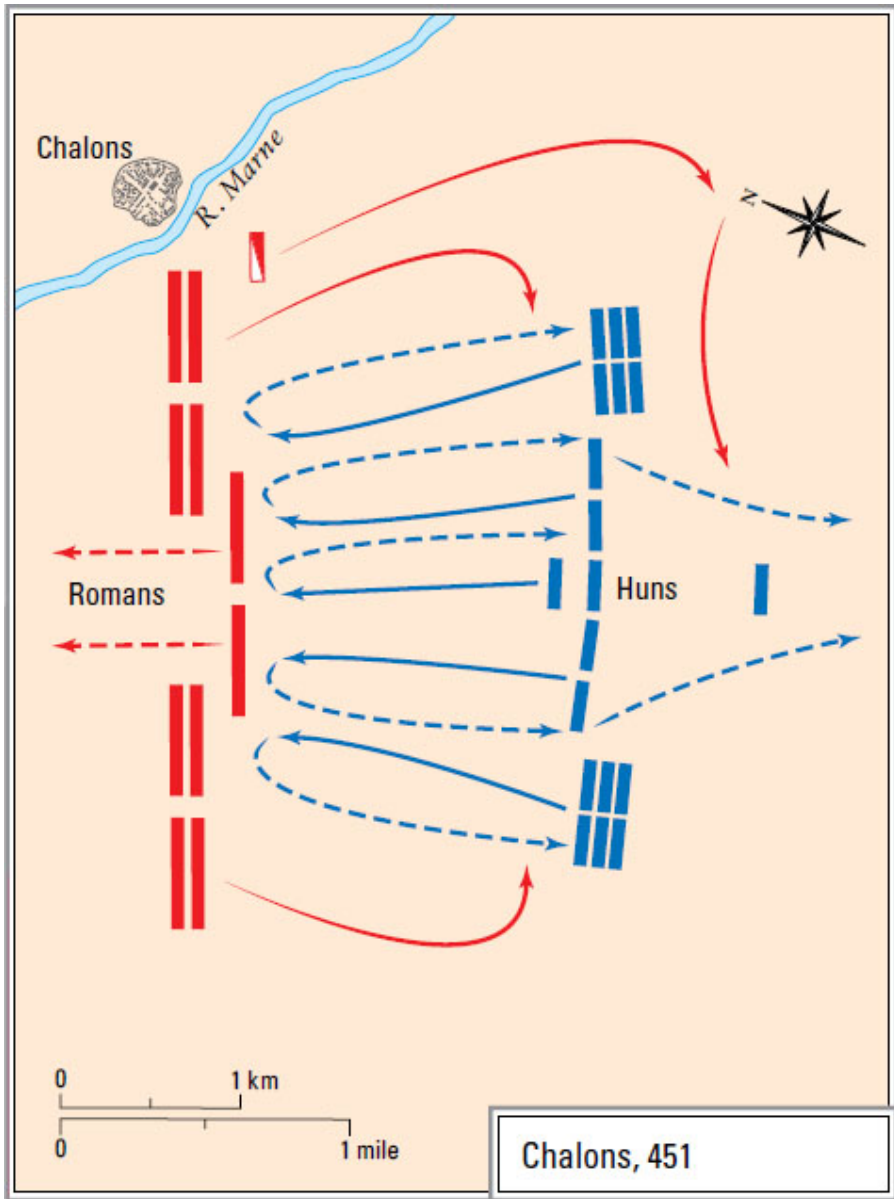
In the spring of 451 the Huns crossed the Rhine and pushed into Gaul. Aided by local allies they pillaged Divodurum (Metz) and besieged Orleans. Roman commander Flavius Aëtius began assembling an alliance to counter the invasion.

■ SIEGE OF ORLEANS, 451

Unwilling to be pinned down against the defences of Orleans, Attila broke off his siege at the approach of an allied Roman and Visigoth army under the command of Flavius Aëtius and Theodoric.

■ CHALONS/CATALAUNIAN FIELDS, 451

Interrupted in their siege of Orleans by the approach of a Roman and allied army, the Huns under Attila moved off. However, they were burdened by large quantities of loot gathered during their campaign in Gaul, and were caught by the Romans. On the Catalaunian Fields, probably somewhere between Chalons and Troyes, the Huns formed up for battle. The Huns had traditionally been horse archers, and many still fought in this way. However, the majority of Attila's force were infantry. This may have been due to a shortage of mounts, perhaps because of poor grazing conditions, or it could have been a tactical decision. The Huns had been fighting infantry-based forces for some years and may have decided to adopt their tactics.



The army facing the Huns was commanded by Flavius Aëtius, who had been expecting an invasion for some years. He was familiar with his enemies, having commanded Hun mercenaries in the past. He had also been for a time a hostage of the Huns when they were led by Rua, Attila's uncle. Flavius Aëtius had spent some time preparing for the Huns' arrival and had forged alliances with other leaders in Gaul, notably among the Visigoths and the Alans.

The 'Roman' portion of Flavius Aëtius' force was different from the legions of previous centuries. His troops were largely recruited from barbarians who had settled along the frontiers of the empire and were

less well disciplined than the former legions. The Visigoths sent a contingent of heavy cavalry and infantry while the Alans, who had recently been attacked at Orleans, provided cavalry. Contingents also came from other allies, such as Burgundy.

Although the two forces were of equivalent size, the Huns had the advantage of a more unified command structure, and Attila did not need to worry about the political reliability of his allies. Flavius Aëtius was suspicious of the Alans in particular, and there was always the chance that King Theodoric of the Visigoths might decide it was in his best interests to throw in his lot with the Huns.

Flavius Aëtius was forced to work with what he had, so deployed his Roman troops on the left flank and the Visigoths, who had provided the strongest and most numerous 'barbarian' contingent, on the right. Between them were the Alans. Facing them was the main Hun force, with allied Ostrogoths opposite the Visigoths and a force of Gepids facing the Roman contingent. Both sides advanced rapidly, seeking to gain control of high ground in the centre of the battlefield. The Romans won this fight, driving back the Huns who were then personally rallied by Attila.

Renewed hand-to-hand fighting ensued, in which the Visigothic king Theodoric and his son Thorismund were killed. The enraged Visigoths then drove the Huns back and forced them to seek refuge in their camp, but night fell before anything more could be made of the advantage thus gained.

The following morning, both armies formed up for battle again, with the Romans and their allies deployed defensively on the high ground they had captured. No attack materialized and the standoff continued for several days before the Visigoth contingent began to withdraw. This left the Roman force too weak to interfere as the Huns and their allies also began a withdrawal. They took with them their booty, but Flavius Aëtius was still able to claim a victory over the invaders.

■ ROME, 455

A dispute between the Vandal kingdom of North Africa and Roman Emperor Petronius Maximus resulted in an invasion of Italy. Little opposition materialized. Petronius Maximus was killed, and Rome was sacked for 14 days.

■ CAMPI, 456

Assisted by Frankish and Burgundian forces, a Visigoth army invaded Spain. At Campus Paramus a Suevic army under King Rechiar attempted to drive them back but was defeated. Rechiar was captured and executed.

■ CARTAGENA, 460/461

Roman Emperor Majorian planned to invade North Africa and take it back from the Vandal Kingdom. This move was forestalled by the Vandals, who surprised the Romans at Cartagena. Some ships defected; the remainder were destroyed.

■ TRIPOLI, 468

Despite successes, including the destruction of a Vandal fleet and the capture of Tripoli, a Roman expedition against the Vandal kingdom failed. The loss of its supporting fleets, and strong resistance on land, made victory impossible.

Wars of the Eastern and European Tribes 250–500

■ THERMOPYLAE, 267

The Heruli, a Germanic tribe, invaded the Balkans and Black Sea coastal regions in the 260s. Local forces, unsupported by the Legions, attempted to hold the pass of Thermopylae against them but were overrun.

■ MAINZ, 406

Attempting to prevent an invasion of Gaul by the Alans, Suevi and Vandals, the Franks attacked them as they crossed the Rhine. Although initially successful the Franks were counter-attacked by Alan forces and driven off.

■ AQUILEIA, 452

Defeated at the Catalaunian Fields, the Huns crossed into northern Italy and laid siege to Aquileia. The city held out for a time but was eventually taken, opening the way for attacks on other cities in the region.

■ NEDAO, 454

After the death of Attila, internal conflict over leadership weakened the Huns sufficiently that many of their subject peoples rose up against them. A Hunnic force led by the sons of Attila clashed with an alliance of Germanic peoples under the leadership of King Ardaric of the Gepidae at Nedao. Heavy casualties were taken on both sides, including Attila's favourite son Ellac, with the result that the power of the Huns in Europe was broken.

■ AYLESFORD, 455

Aylesford was the site of a clash between Britons and Saxons, who had settled in Kent. Historical accounts vary, and it is not clear which side won, though the Saxon leader Horsa was killed.

■ URBICAS, 456

Hoping to reclaim Hispania for the Roman Empire, the Western Emperor requested aid from the Visigothic kingdom in Gaul. The Visigoths defeated the Suevi and Vandals, eventually adding Hispania to their territory.

■ WIPPEDSFLEOT, 466

The battle of Wippedesfleot was a minor but fiercely fought skirmish between Saxon forces under the command of Hengist, and a force of Britons. The outcome of the battle is not recorded.

■ SOISSONS, 486

The Domain of Soissons survived the collapse of the Roman Empire and retained its stability during the chaotic period that followed. Its

wealth made it a target for outside aggression, which was kept at bay until the Franks united under Clovis I. Clovis made war on Soissons and finally issued a challenge to Syagrius, its ruler. The ensuring Frankish victory in the battle of Soissons greatly increased Frankish power.

■ SIRMIMUM, 489

A huge Gothic army, marching west towards Italy, was opposed by forces of the Gepidae at Sirmium in Pannonia. Victory over the Gepidae allowed the Goths access to the Julian Alps and opened the route into Italy.

■ ISONZO/SONTIUS, 489

The Ostrogoths had been allies of the Eastern Roman Empire for some time, but tensions were increasing. Thus the Eastern Emperor suggested that King Theodoric take his forces west against Flavius Odoacer, King of Italy, who had deposed the last Western Emperor. Theodoric defeated Odoacer's forces at the River Isonzo and was able to gain entry into Italy, after which he marched on Verona and won another victory.

■ FAENZA, 490

Having failed to halt Theodoric the Great's campaign at the Isonzo, Odoacer, King of Italy, was besieged at Ravenna. A sortie from the city inflicted a sharp defeat on the Ostrogoths, forcing a retreat.

■ ADDA, 490

Retreating from his defeat at Faenza, Theodoric the Great fought a defensive battle on the River Adda, forcing Odoacer to fall back to Ravenna where he was once again placed under siege.

■ SIEGE OF RAVENNA, 490–493

Ravenna, capital of King Odoacer of Italy, was besieged by the forces of Ostrogothic King Theodoric the Great for three years. Although unable to gain entry to the city, Theodoric convinced Odoacer to accept a treaty whereby they would jointly rule Italy. Theodoric murdered Odoacer at a banquet held to celebrate the peace treaty. He ruled Italy ostensibly as a viceroy of the Eastern Empire, but in practice was independent of imperial authority.

■ TOLBIAC, 496

Having united the Franks under his rule, Clovis I was seriously challenged by the Alemanni. At the battle of Tolbiac he vowed that if he won, he would become a Christian, with profound implications for religion in Europe.

Roman Empire's Eastern Mediterranean Wars 200–400

■ NISIBIS, 217

In 216, Emperor Caracalla treacherously initiated a new conflict with Parthia in the hope of exploiting internal differences. He was assassinated the following year, and in the meantime a large Parthian force was assembled to recapture territories taken by Rome. The decisive clash, fought between the primarily infantry army of Rome and the cavalry forces of Parthia, came at Nisibis.

Roman forces adopted a defensive deployment, using caltrops to break up the Parthians' charge. Light infantry were sent forward to skirmish with the Parthians, retiring between the heavier cohorts when hard pressed. In this manner the Romans withstood three days of attacks.

By the end of the third day both sides had suffered such heavy losses that morale threatened to collapse. The Parthians agreed to accept reparations in return for a peace treaty with the new Roman Emperor, Mancrinus.

■ ANTIOCH, 218

Emperor Mancrinus' rule was challenged by Elagbalus, a juvenile cousin of the assassinated Emperor Caracalla. Some of Mancrinus' legions defected, weakening his position. Mancrinus was decisively defeated at Antioch, and was captured whilst trying to flee.

■ CARTHAGE, 238

The province of Africa revolted against Emperor Maximinus Thrax. Although supported by the Senate, the rebels could muster only a force of militia, which was crushed by a single legion from neighbouring Numidia.

■ RESAENA, 243

Emperor Gordian III initiated a campaign against Sassanid Persia, hoping to recapture territory lost while Rome was distracted by internal conflicts. Roman victory at Resaena returned the cities of Carrhae and Nisibis to Roman control.

■ MISICHE, 244

A continued Roman advance into Sassanid territory resulted in a major clash at Misiche. Accounts of the battle vary. Some claim that Rome won, some the Sassanids. Emperor Gordian III may have been killed in the battle; other accounts suggest that he was assassinated by unpaid legionaries afterwards. He was replaced by Philippus Arabs, Prefect of the Praetorian Guard, who made peace with the Sassanids by paying a vast sum in tribute.

■ BARBALISSOS, 253

Conflict over Armenia led to renewed Roman–Sassanid hostilities, this time initiated by the Sassanids. The Roman force was defeated in a major battle at Barbalissos, opening the way for a Sassanid advance on Antioch.

■ EDESSA, 259

Responding to repeated Sassanid incursions into Syria, a large force under Roman emperor Valerian returned the region to Roman control before marching on Edessa. There, the army was decisively defeated and Emperor Valerian captured.

■ EUPHRATES RIVER, 261

Hoping to prevent Sassanid supremacy in the region, Palmyra rescinded its neutrality and sent forces to intercept a Sassanid army as it retired after sacking Antioch. The Palmyrans attacked before the Sassanids could cross the Euphrates to safety.



■ NISIBIS AND CARRHAE, 262

Continuing his campaign against the Sassanids, Odaenathus of Palmyra was able to return Nisibis and Carrhae to Roman rule. He was subsequently assassinated. His wife and successor, Zenobia, then came into conflict with Rome.

■ IMMAE, 271

Facing a superior force of Palmyrian cataphracts, the Roman cavalry feigned a retreat and drew the Palmyrians into an ambush. The remainder of the Palmyrene army collapsed in the face of superior Roman infantry.

■ EMESA, 272

Defeated at Immae, the Palmyrians attempted to defend Emesa. After defeating their Roman opposite numbers, the Palmyrian heavy cavalry became disorganized and was overwhelmed by Roman infantry. Palmyrian Queen Zenobia was captured while fleeing.

■ NILE VALLEY, 273

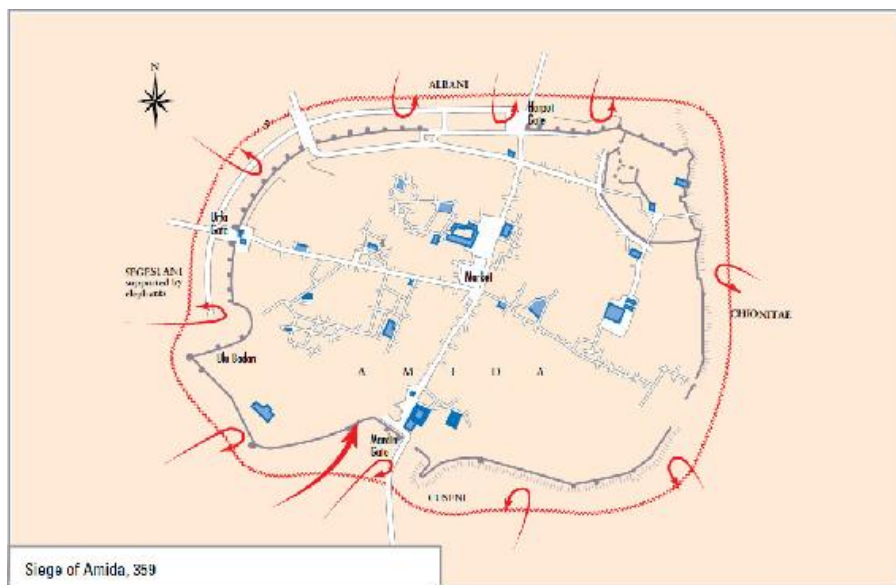
With Roman forces tied down besieging Palmyra, Firmus led a revolt in Egypt, threatening the Roman corn supply. The revolt was put down by Emperor Auralian, who then marched back to Palmyra to deal with a renewed uprising.

■ CALLINICUM, 296

The Sassanid king Narseh launched a campaign in 294 to retake Roman gains in Armenia. Then turning south, he inflicted a serious defeat on Roman forces at a point somewhere between Callinicum and Carrhae. The disaster was blamed on the Roman commander, Galerius, rather than his troops, with Emperor Diocletian taking steps to distance himself from the stigma of defeat. Diocletian did, however, arrange for reinforcements to be sent to Galerius.

■ TIGRIS RIVER, 297

Although defeated at Callinicum, Galerius was twice victorious over the Sassanids in Armenia, all but annihilating their army. This permitted an advance down the Tigris river and the capture of the Sassanid capital at Ctesiphon.



■ SINGARA, 344/48

Attempting to retake previously lost territories, Sassanid forces besieged Singara. Raids against other parts of Sassanid territory caused the campaign to be broken off. A mutual non-aggression treaty was subsequently agreed with Rome.

■ SIEGE OF AMIDA, 359

The non-aggression treaty with Rome permitted other threats to be eliminated, opening the way for renewed hostilities in 359. The city of Amida withstood siege and repeated assaults by a Sassanid army for several weeks before eventually falling.

■ JULIAN INVASION OF PERSIA, 363

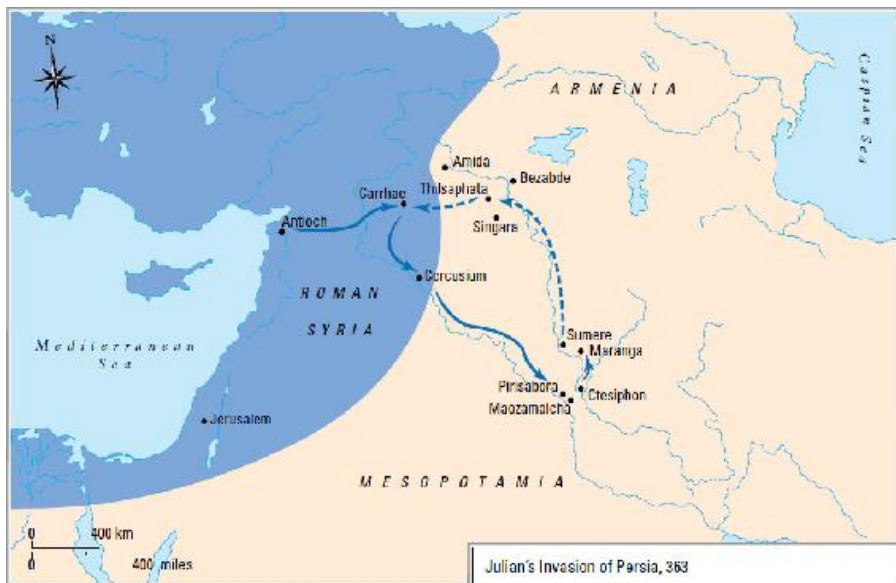
Seeking to cement his position as emperor, Julian undertook a new campaign against Sassanid Persia. He personally commanded the main force, with additional troops marching via Armenia, whose king was instructed to lend his assistance.

■ CTESIPHON, 363

Emperor Julian's campaign against Sassanid Persia was waged, ostensibly, to secure the eastern frontier of the empire. It was, in reality, just as much about gaining the support of the Eastern legions. Thus when the Sassanids attempted to negotiate a treaty, Julian refused to consider their overtures. Instead he assembled his army at Antioch and advanced towards the Euphrates.

The Armenian contingent and some Roman troops were detached to ravage the countryside of Media, and he made a feint towards Carrhae. Rather than take the same route as his predecessors, down the Tigris, Julian instead marched along the Euphrates supported by a purpose-built fleet which carried supplies for his army.

Some garrisons along the route of Julian's march were neutralized by diplomacy, essentially being left unmolested if they agreed not to act against his force. Others were reduced by a series of quick sieges. There was little serious opposition on the march, though the Sassanids did flood areas to slow down the Romans' progress. Only at Ctesiphon itself did opposition materialize.



The Roman army launched a double-envelopment attack, crushing the wings of the Sassanid force and driving the centre back into the city. Although the Sassanids had fielded cataphract cavalry and war elephants, their army collapsed before these could make much impression on the battlefield.

Julian rejected a peace offer from the Sassanids and laid siege to the capital, but could not gain entry. With a larger Sassanid army approaching, and the failure of his detached forces to rejoin, Julian was forced to retreat from Ctesiphon. He was killed during the retreat and thereafter all Roman emperors followed a defensive strategy,

bringing to an end the age of Roman conquests.

■ SAMARRA, 363

During Emperor Julian's retreat from Ctesiphon, his army was attacked at Samarra. Although the attack was beaten off, the emperor received a fatal wound. His successor, Jovian, agreed to a very unfavourable peace with Sassanid Persia.

■ MARITZA RIVER, 378

While Emperor Valens awaited reinforcements, he sent out a detachment under Count Sebastian, his Master Peditum, to harass the Goths. Sebastian's force made a successful attack against a Goth camp on the River Maritza.

Rome's Internal Wars 285–500

■ MARGUS, 285

Diocletian, commanding the Eastern armies, fought Carinus, the son of the murdered emperor Carus. Carinus's Western troops at first prevailed over Diocletian's troops, veterans of a difficult Persian campaign. Carinus's sudden assassination left Diocletian sole emperor.

■ INVASION OF ITALY, 307

Galerius moved west into Italy after Maxentius proclaimed himself Emperor at Rome. Finding Italy mobilized and fortified against him, Galerius withdrew, shadowed by Maxentius's army, devastating the heart of the empire and ruining his reputation.

■ SUSA, 312

Constantine's bid for sole rule of the empire began with storming this northern Italian city after his army descended from the Rhine. Bombardment with incendiaries and an escalade reduced the city to ruins and surrender.

■ TURIN, 312

Maxentius's forces, with a contingent of protected cavalry equipped like those the Romans had fought in the East, awaited Constantine's advance before the walls of this city. Maxentius's commanders arranged these armoured men and horses in a crescent formation with a central wedge designed to pierce Constantine's line. Constantine's troops, drawing on previous experience, successfully eluded their charges, and the retreating survivors found the gates of the city closed against them.

■ MILAN, 312

When Constantine captured it, the official capital of the Western Roman Empire contained an imperial palace. The news of the city's fall contributed to Maxentius's decision to advance northwards out of Rome to engage Constantine.

■ VERONA, 312

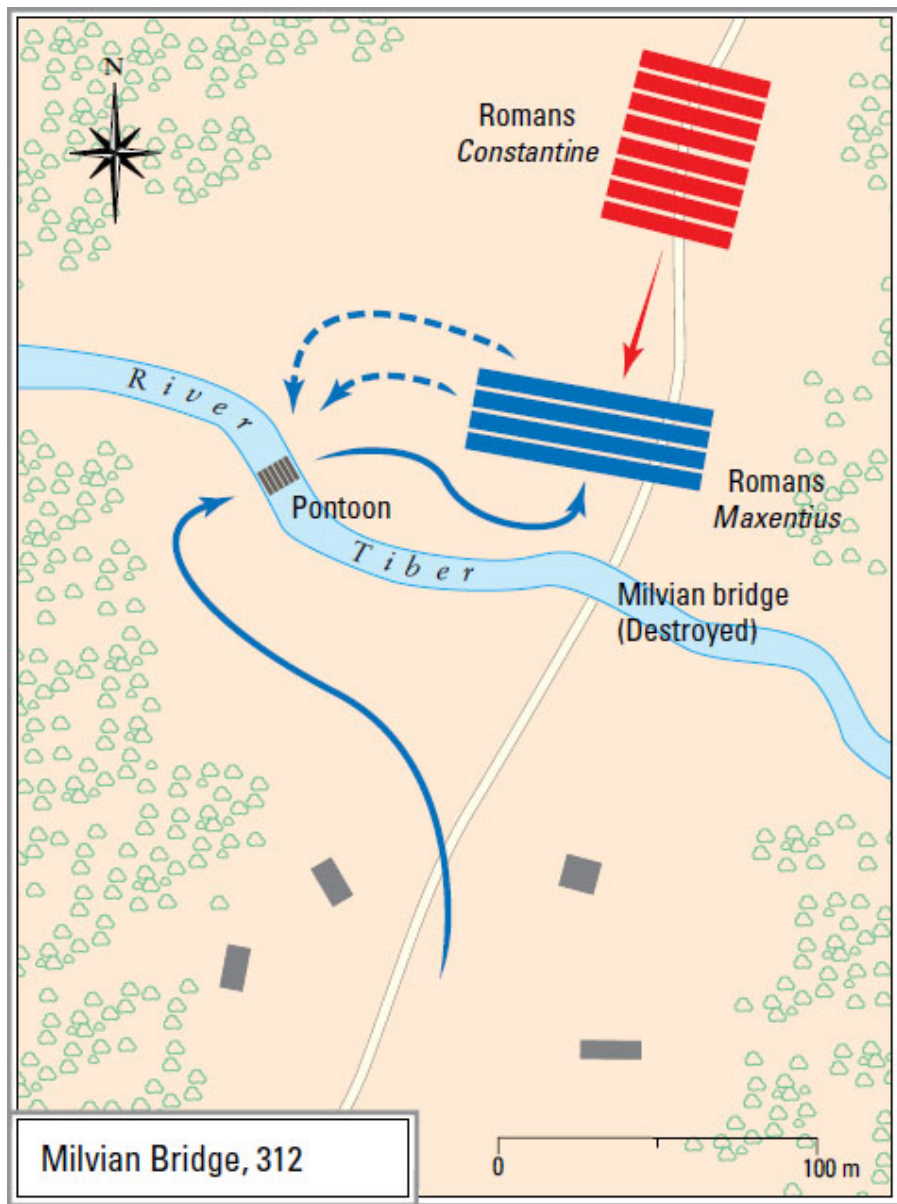
At the news of Constantine's advance, Maxentius's general Pompeianus mustered a large concentration of troops near Verona. Constantine suddenly doubled the length of his formation, prevailing and killing Pompeianus, leaving Constantine master of northern Italy.

■ MILVIAN BRIDGE, 312

Although Maxentius had fortified and provisioned Rome for a long siege, Constantine's uninterrupted series of victories in the north of Italy contributed to Maxentius's unease about his hold on the Western Empire. His subordinates beaten or dead, Maxentius himself advanced

up the Appian Way with his personal core of Praetorian Guards and the balance of his heavy cavalry and infantry. The speed of Constantine's ongoing advance southward found the two armies colliding just on the far side of the Tiber bridge, the stone bows of which Maxentius had previously ordered demolished, his forces crossing over a pontoon structure. Maxentius put his heavy cavalry and lighter horse in the front, hoping to shatter and scatter Constantine's line.

Inspired by a vision or hope of victory, Constantine proclaimed an alliance with the Christian deity and blazoned a Christian symbol on his army's shields. His own seasoned cavalry attacked Maxentius's horse pell-mell, which, morale undoubtedly suffering from previous defeats, collapsed in disorder back upon Maxentius's advancing column, leaving it disordered and its flanks exposed. Notwithstanding the reverse, the Praetorian Guard stood firm, but their resistance to the last was insufficient to overcome the onset of Constantine's victorious veterans. Maxentius's untried Italian levies broke and fled immediately.



Maxentius himself seems to have wavered at the last moment and decided to return to Rome and there try to withstand Constantine's siege, a tactic which had previously succeeded against Galerius, although Maxentius had lost heavily in this battle. The stress of the resulting panicked retreat collapsed the wooden structure of the pontoon bridge and drowned Maxentius and many of his soldiers, leaving Constantine to enter Rome in triumph the following day with Maxentius's head on a pike.

■ TZIRALLUM, 313

Battle between Licinius and Maximin for control of the Eastern

Empire, ceded to Licinius by Constantine. Some 70,000 Legionaries faced Licinius's 30,000 levies from Illyria, but Licinius's superior ability as commander steadied his men to victory.

■ CIBALAE, 314

Constantine took 20,000 men across the border of his territories and faced Licinius with 35,000 in upper Pannonia. Terrain protected Constantine's flanks as his forces launched a charge that routed Licinius's forces with heavy losses.

■ MARDIA, 314

Constantine advanced into Thrace and again faced Licinius on favourable ground. A reserve of 5000 men in Licinius's rear attacked during the daylong struggle, forcing Licinius's forces to retreat and Licinius to ask for terms.

■ ADRIANOPLE, 323

Adrianople was the final show-down between Licinius and Constantine for control of the empire. Constantine had sent forces into Licinius's territory to repel invading Goths, which remained in position after evicting the barbarians. Licinius mustered a considerable army in the plains near the city and moved a fleet into the Hellespont behind it. Constantine moved 120,000 seasoned infantry and cavalry against Licinius's 150,000 infantry and 15,000 cavalry. Licinius waited on the far bank of the Hebrus river as Constantine's army moved towards him.

Initial skirmishing and the river's current led Constantine to lead the crossing personally, in which he was wounded while his engineers began constructing a wooden bridge. With Licinius and his soldiers' attentions drawn to the bridgehead, Constantine's force of 5000 sent around to Licinius's rear drove the larger army down to level ground. Constantine prevailed with 34,000 slain and Licinius dislodged.

■ CHRYSOPOLIS, 323

Licinius raised a new levy of 50–60,000 men and engaged Constantine's army on these heights once Constantine's fleet had ferried it over the Bosphorus. Licinius's green troops fought surprisingly well before dispersing after 25,000 casualties.

■ HELLESPONT, 324

Licinius's collected naval forces before Constantine's attack numbered some 350 fleet units drawn up in the Hellespont. Licinius retreated into Byzantium's fortifications. Constantine entrusted his own force of some 200 smaller vessels to his son Crispus and his admirals, with orders to force the Hellespont. In the strait's close quarters, the smaller vessels proved less hampered, destroying 130 vessels and 5000 men. Licinius surrendered after the assault on Byzantium began.

■ REVOLT OF MAGNENTIUS, 350

In a palace coup, the Illyrian Magnentius, a trusted senior officer, sent loyal cavalry who murdered the Emperor Constans while he was hunting in central Gaul. His own troops proclaimed him emperor in the west.

■ MURSA, 351

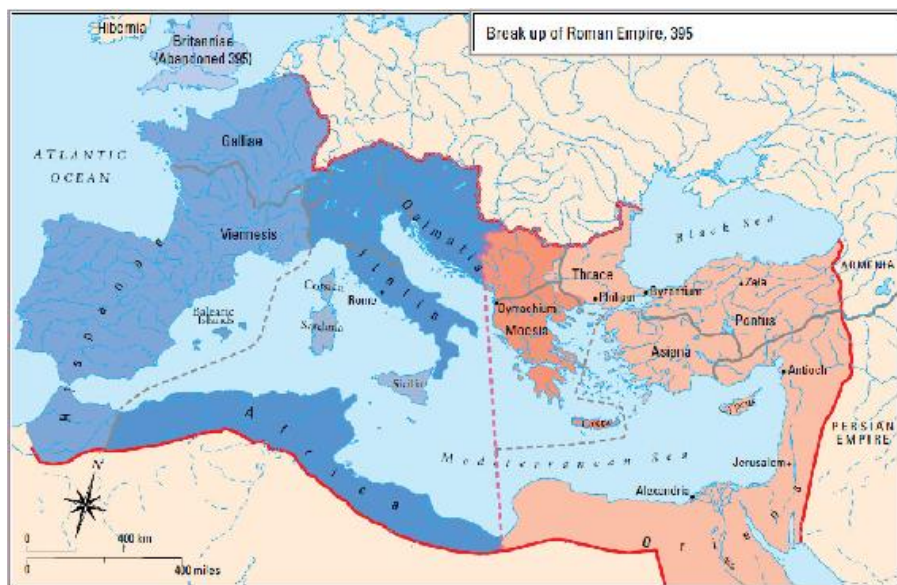
Constantius separated or cowed Magnentius's allies, whose forces augmented his as he moved west. Magnentius moved east and attacked the city of Mursa with a strong force, defeated by Constantius's heavy cavalry with 54,000 casualties.

■ PAVIA, 351

An over-extended pursuit of Magnentius allowed his remaining loyal forces to drive off the vanguard of Constantius's cavalry here. Magnentius was able to raise an army in the furthest west and resume the civil war.

■ MONS SELEUCUS, 353

Constantius's troops crossed the French Alps and bore down on the last of Magnentius's levies. Magnentius's forces collapsed. Unable to enlist more soldiers and with the cities of Gaul supporting Constantius, Magnentius fell on his sword.



■ THYATIRA, 366

Valens, the Eastern Emperor, found Procopius, a friend of Julian, proclaimed emperor in Constantinople. Senior commanders in the field remained loyal to Valens, defeating Procopius's forces in this battle. Procopius himself was afterwards captured and executed.

■ SAVE, 388

Theodosius I and Maximus, who had made himself Western Emperor,

fought here in 388, Theodosius moving to restore Valentinian II to single authority. Theodosius's allies rushed Maximus's army across this river, with Maximus's army surrendering at dawn.

■ RAVENNA, 432

Western generals Boniface and Aëtius fought for control of the West. Boniface prevailed but fell, mortally wounded. Aëtius fled to the Huns, with whom he would later return as a conqueror.

Sassanid Persia and South-west/Central Asia 200–500

■ HORMOZGAN, 226

Adarvan, the last Parthian shah, lost his battle and dynasty to the first Sassanian emperor, Ardashir I, in this valley in southern Persia. The Sassanians moved to consolidate and centralize power in a soon-resurgent Persia.

■ CONQUEST OF ARMENIA, 295–298

Under the shah Nersi, the Persian army had undergone reorganization and become a more formidable force, invading and occupying the Roman client kingdom. An initial Roman counter-attack had met with disaster at Haran in 296. Galerius, later emperor, invaded with the intention of restoring King Tiridates. The Romans moved through the mountains and scattered the Persians with a surprise attack, securing Armenia for Tiridates. Persia agreed to the Tigris boundary.

■ MEROE, C. 350

The Kushite kingdom to the south of Egypt had its capital here for centuries, despite Egyptian and Roman incursions. Invasions northward from the Christianized Aksumite kingdom of Ethiopia led to the kingdom and city's destruction.

■ AVARAYR, 451

Shah Yazdegerd II of the occupying Persians sought to impose Zoroastrianism on his Christian Armenian subjects. Instrumental in this effort was an Armenian-born Persian viceroy, Vasak of Siuniq, fiercely loathed by his countrymen. With invasions along the frontier by the powerful Heptalian tribe and a revolt in Georgia tying down considerable Persian resources, the Armenians under Vardan Mamikonian rose to protect their faith. Promised Byzantine support evaporated, but the Armenians enjoyed some success against smaller Persian detachments while accumulating an army by late May of some 60,000 peasant infantry and traditional heavy cavalry. The Persian Empire mustered 300,000 under Mushkan against them, including 10,000 elite cavalry, war elephants and 40,000 Armenians under Vasak. The Armenian elites fought well against their former comrades in the Persian army, but Vardan's death resulted in defeat but religious toleration for the Armenians.

Britain 450–500

■ AEGELSTHREP, 455

Crushing of the last British resistance under Vortigern by the Saxons under Hengist and Horsa. Having been invited in as mercenaries against invading Picts, the Saxons turned upon the British and occupied Sussex and Essex.

Chinese Jin Dynasty Wars 265–420

■ FEI RIVER, 383

The Former Qin state, having succeeded in unifying northern China, began pushing southwards. The Eastern Jin Dynasty launched an offensive to forestall an invasion, but was defeated. The Former Qin then assembled a large but poorly trained army from its many subject states, and advanced southwards. After capturing Shouyang, the Former Qin vanguard was ambushed and defeated by the Jin. The Former Qin then brought up their main force, which set up camp at the Fei river. A relocation order caused confusion in the disorganized Former Qin ranks, resulting in panic as the Jin attacked in force. The Jin then launched a vigorous pursuit, driving the Former Qin before them and annihilating some units. This triggered a series of revolts in Former Qin territory, leading to the eventual collapse of the Former Qin Empire and the rise of the Later Qin.

■ CAHNE SLOPE, 395

Northern Wei had been a vassal state to the Later Yan, but had begun to assert its independence. This prompted a military expedition to return Northern Wei to vassalage. The army of Northern Wei sheltered behind the Yellow River, but a sudden freeze allowed the Later Yan forces to cross over the ice and launch an attack.

Pursuing the army of Northern Wei to Cahne Slope, the Later Yan became distracted by the need to forage for supplies, enabling the Northern Wei army to move into position undetected. A surprise attack routed the Later Yan, driving many troops into the river; others were captured and later executed. The losses taken at Cahne Slope sufficiently weakened the Later Yan that Northern Wei was subsequently able to launch an invasion of its own, overrunning much of what had been Later Yan territory.

■ YEH, 528

Advancing on the rebel army of Ge Rong, which was encamped on the plains of Hebei north of Ye, a force of 7000 elite cavalry under Erzhu Rong caught the more numerous enemy by surprise and routed them.

■ SHAYUAN, 537

An invasion of Western Wei by a large Eastern Wei force was decisively defeated at Shayuan. This enabled Western Wei to occupy large areas of territory and capture Chang'an before pushing further east.

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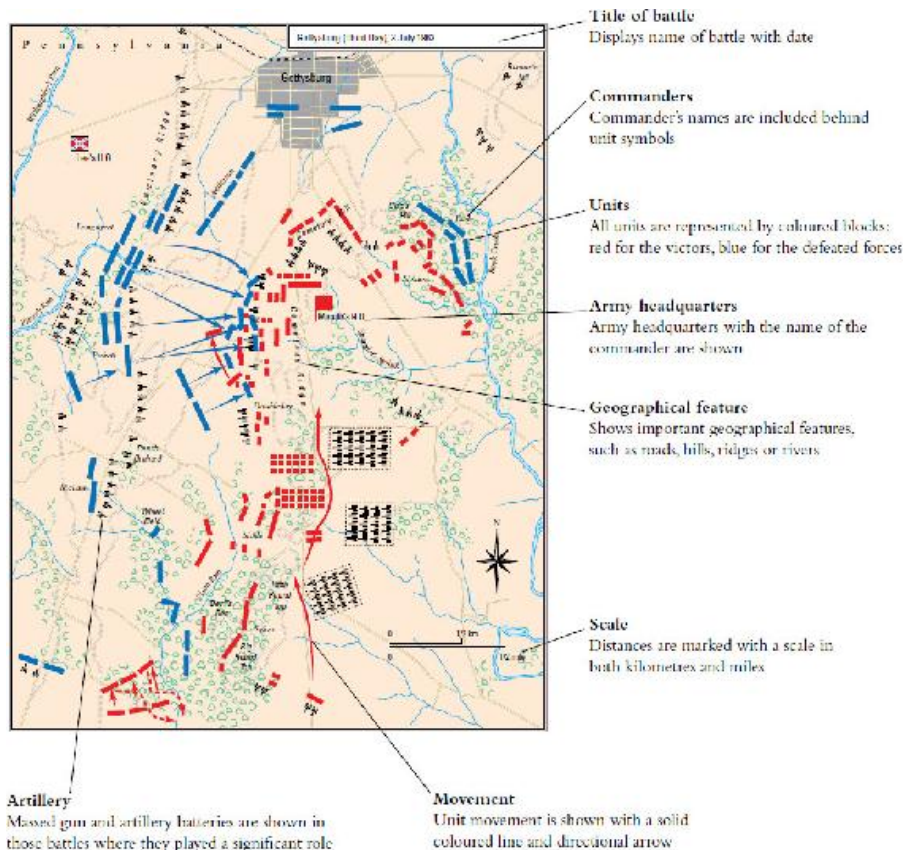
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HOW TO USE THE MAPS

Each map in this book is designed to provide a concise picture of the battle as it unfolded. The dispositions of both sides are shown with red and blue blocks, the red forces indicating the recognized victors and the blue the defeated forces. Movement is shown with coloured arrows. Significant geographical features are also marked, such as towns, hills, ridges, roads, railway lines and rivers. A distance scale is also included. For battles after 1914, the standard NATO military unit symbols are used, indicating the type of force, its size, commander and number or other identifying mark.



KEY TO THE MAP SYMBOLS



Direction of movement
of victors



Direction of movement
of defeated forces



Secondary movement



Castle or fort



Camp



Cavalry



Infantry



Guns/artillery batteries



Ancient galleys



Ships



Ship sunk



Aircraft movement/
attack



Airfield

U-boat



Conflict/flashpoint



Battle



Types of unit symbols (post 1914 maps)



Infantry



Cavalry



Armoured



Airborne



Combined (Corps level and above)

Unit sizes

XXXXX

Army Group/Front

XXXX

Army

XXX

Corps

XX

Division

X

Brigade

III

Regiment

II

Battalion

I

Company

How to understand a unit symbol

Unit size/level

XX



4 Marines

Schmidt

Number/designation

Identity/commander's name

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